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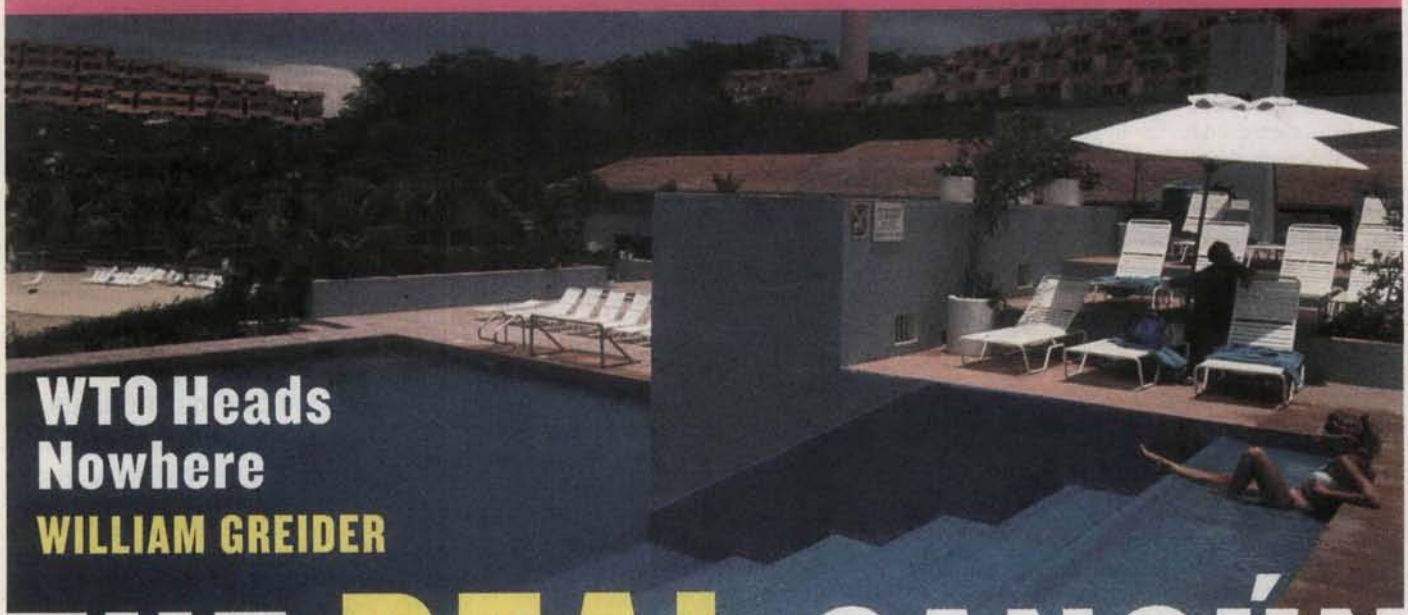

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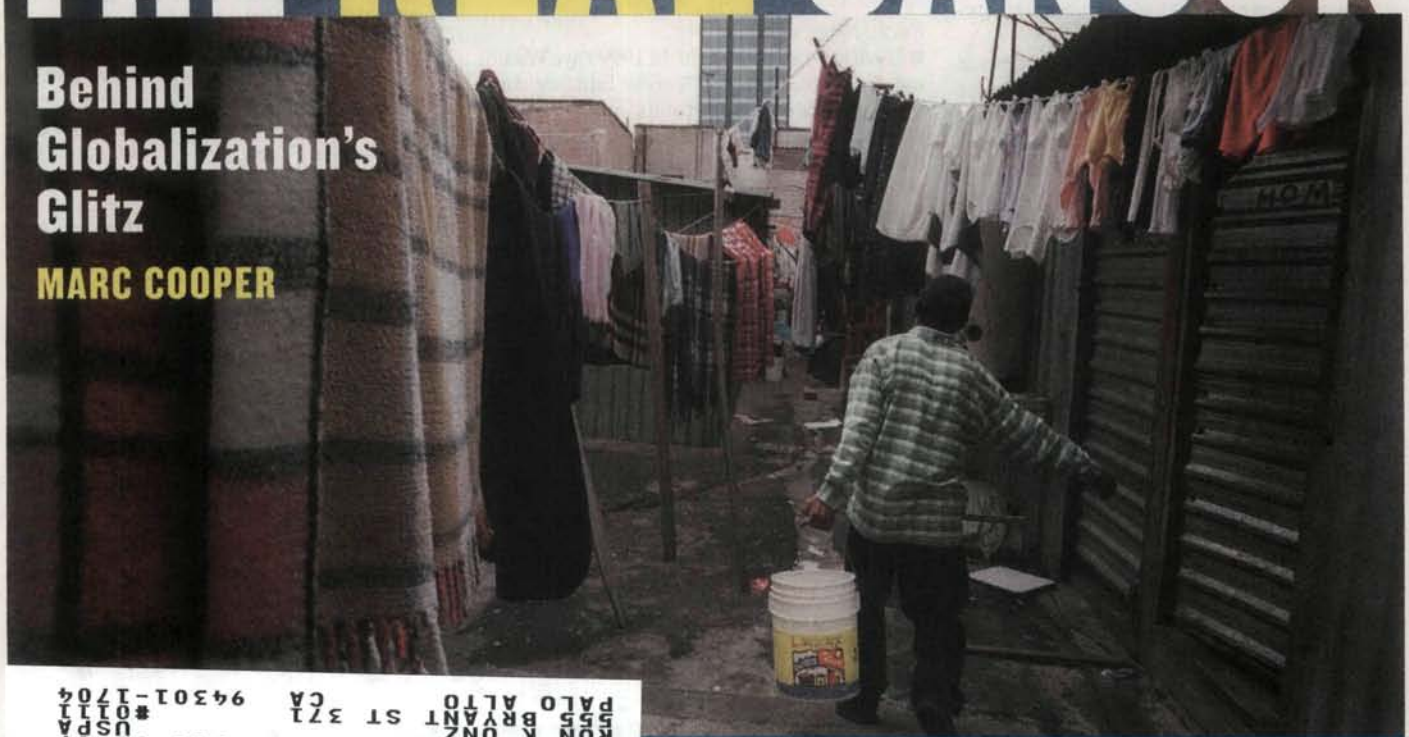

Behind Globalization's Glitz

MARC COOPER

...so Where Have We Come? Two Years After 9/11 THE EDITORS

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EDITORIALS

September 11, 2003

Anniversaries are historical page markers; they denote a time to pause and reflect. On the second anniversary of the September 11 attacks, we mark not only the terrible loss of life on that day but a failure of American leadership. It is also a time to raise the fundamental question that has supposedly focused the national effort for the past two years: Have we become safer, more secure, today?

Wherever we look the answer is no. The Bush Administration has squandered the good will that flowed from the rest of the world after the attacks. The Administration's go-it-alone, militarist foreign policy divided and weakened the United Nations and alienated longstanding allies. Now an isolated United States faces rising casualty lists and costs in Iraq and turns to the UN it once scorned for help—with an arrogance ill suited to winning friends.

The Iraq war, promoted by a White House disinformation campaign, diverted resources and undercut global antiterrorist strategies. Bungled postwar planning fueled anti-Americanism and unleashed chaos and disorder. These consequences were foreseen by antiwar critics, including this magazine, but the critics' warnings were swamped by the Administration's lies.

Poor postwar planning has also vitiated the antiterrorist effort in Afghanistan, where US troops are again battling Taliban forces. Reconstruction has gone slowly because donor nations, particularly the United States, have not come through, while lack of security in the countryside hampers aid efforts. Women are back in burqas; warlords misrule in the provinces.

In the Middle East, the neocon claim that defeating Saddam Hussein would enhance the prospects of an Israeli-Palestinian settlement by eliminating a powerful supporter of Palestinian militancy has proved illusory. The "road map" is in tatters. The Sharon government kills Hamas leaders and builds its divisive wall; Palestinian suicide bombers lash back with more blind carnage.

In the Far East, the threat of a conventional or even nuclear war has not diminished. Multilateral talks with North Korea have started, but influential hard-liners in the Administration continue to press for "regime change." China now says the United States is the "main obstacle" to a peaceful settlement with Pyongyang.

At home the Administration has failed to take sufficient measures to protect us. As David Corn writes on page 26, "crucial areas of homeland security—ports, chemical plants, emergency response, biodefense—are not getting adequate attention or funding." Meanwhile, the Administration builds a bigger national security state, suppressing civil liberties and bullying aliens and other politically weak groups. (A hopeful sign is that its policies have sparked growing opposition, even among conservatives.)

With the skyrocketing costs of the war, and his tax cuts for the wealthy, the President has placed the nation's fiscal security at risk and left the financially strapped states reeling. Since 2001, 2.7 million jobs have been lost, the average length of unemployment is at the highest point in two decades and real average weekly earnings have been steadily declining.

After jet planes guided by blind hatred smashed into the World Trade towers and the Pentagon, killing more than 3,000, most Americans placed their trust in our leaders. This Administration has betrayed that trust. It has misled the people for partisan ends and trampled on our liberties. The central issue in the 2004 presidential election is becoming clear. This Administration has become a great threat to American values. We must oust it and take back our democracy.

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COMMENT

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UK Sideshow to Iraq

London

With its daily dominance of the headlines and a stellar cast from the worlds of government, secret intelligence and the media, the Hutton inquiry, playing here until the end of the month, is easily the greatest show in town. There is even a white canvas big top for journalists, pitched in a yard of the Royal Courts of Justice, where Lord Hutton, a former chief justice of Northern Ireland, is conducting his "investigation into the circumstances surrounding the death" of Dr. David Kelly. Kelly was the British government expert on Iraqi chemical and biological weapons whose body was found in the woods in July shortly after he was named as the source of a controversial BBC report claiming that the government had "sexed up" the intelligence contained in its dossier on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

Until Kelly's death the British government had maintained what a student of Nixon era might term a "modified, limited hangout" on the sources of Tony Blair's claim, in the House of Commons last September, that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction ready to launch "within forty-five minutes." Since the BBC first reported in late May that portions of the Iraq dossier (and Blair's speech) had been doctored to make the case for war seem more urgent, pressure has been building on the government. When Alastair Campbell, Blair's spokesman, responded with an all-out attack on the BBC's credibility, it seemed like a heavy-handed attempt to change the subject. But now, in the aftermath of Kelly's death, it appears that Campbell's gambit will succeed. The question of why British and American troops are still fighting—and dying—in Iraq has all but disappeared from view.

Instead we have Hutton's sideshow of fascinating, mostly trivial, revelations. Yes, Alastair Campbell was intimately involved in drafting the September dossier—though John Scarlett, the career spook in charge of producing the document, told Hutton that Campbell merely offered suggestions on "presentation." And no, the BBC wasn't entirely happy with its own reporting—but given that Campbell was a habitual bully whose past complaints about coverage hadn't always proved true, the BBC wasn't going to back down either. Blair's testimony on August 28 had the public camping out for tickets the night before, and the Prime Minister's remark that if he had knowingly overstated the danger from Iraq "it would have merited my resignation," though a disarming gesture, still carried the risk that someone might call his bluff. But Campbell's surprise resignation the following day, timed perfectly to monopolize the Sunday papers, was a sideshow within the sideshow that directed the public gaze even further from the pretext on which this country went to war.

Lord Hutton himself is a formidable inquisitor who has managed, almost in passing, to elicit any number of embarrassing admissions from Blair and his ministers. In contrast to the blanket denial issued immediately after Kelly's death, for example, Blair now described himself as very much involved in the decision to out Kelly. And the hundreds of documents on the inquiry's excellent website (www.the-hutton-inquiry.org.uk), many of them with classifications that would normally insure their being kept secret for thirty years, have given the British a tantalizing taste of

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COMMENT

open government—and a reminder of how little this government has done to redeem its promises on freedom of information. Nor can Hutton's very narrow remit, with its determined focus on Kelly's personal tragedy rather than questions of policy, save Blair from Kelly's widow, who accused the government of hanging her husband out to dry. David Kelly felt "totally let down and betrayed," Janice Kelly told the inquiry.

Kelly's suicide has brought Blair's government to its lowest point yet in the opinion polls, but as they say in Washington, you can't beat somebody with nobody, and none of the other parties seem able to capitalize on Blair's misfortune. The only potential danger is from inside the Labour Party, whose annual conference next month begins as Hutton is winding down. For the moment, though, the truly damaging questions haven't even been asked. Why was Blair so determined to make the case for war? How did Bush explain US objectives, and what conditions, if any, did Blair place on Britain's willingness to circumvent the United Nations? How much did US and British planners rely on Iraqi exiles for their information? Was there—is there—an exit strategy? The Hutton inquiry may have briefly lifted the veil of Britain's culture of official secrecy, but for answers to those questions we will have to await investigations taking place in the city where Blair's choices were framed for him: Washington. D.D. GUTTENPLAN

D.D. Guttenplan writes from The Nation*'s London bureau.*

Alabama Breakup

While the national media gaze has fixed upon the battle to move a two-and-a-half-ton Ten Commandments monument out of view in the state's judiciary building, Alabama is about to have its most important election in living memory. The September 9 tax-reform vote has implications for every state drowning in deficits. It will be yes or no for the only item on Alabama's ballot: Amendment One, authorizing a $1.2 billion revenue-raising package of desperately needed money for education, healthcare and job training. Approval would mean a first step toward overhauling one of the most regressive state tax structures in the United States. Proportionally, Alabama taxes its poorest citizens three times as much as its wealthiest.

Republican Governor Bob Riley is the unexpected instigator of tax fairness. Everyone who voted for him last year, and everyone who didn't, pegged the former congressman and rural Clay County agribusinessman as an ultraconservative Reaganite. They weren't altogether wrong. Mention capital punishment, abortion, gay rights or gun control and that Bob Riley readily appears. But invoke Christian stewardship and Jesus's call to aid "the least of these," and you face Riley's startling transformation.

Somewhere on the campaign trail, Riley became "convicted" by the power of an essay titled "An Argument for Tax Reform Based on Judeo-Christian Ethics," by University of Alabama tax-law professor Susan Pace Hamill. Hamill, a Methodist given to evangelical urgency, documented how the state tax system "economically oppresses low-income Alabamians" while benefiting the wealthy, warning that "individuals claiming to be part of the People of God can no longer complacently tolerate Alabama's tax structure." In editorials and public meetings, she and a chorus of others have challenged the piety of politicians and the priorities of religious leaders in the Heart of Dixie, where nine out of ten adults say they practice Christianity. Govenor Riley, a Southern Baptist, began talking about the "immorality" of a system that starts taxing family income at $4,600, but can't generate enough money from corporations and upper-bracket taxpayers to minimally fund public schools, nursing homes, prisons and other state services.

How jerry-built and precarious is Alabama's fiscal house? Straitjacketed by the nation's lengthiest and worst state constitution, a 1901 document designed by Black Belt planters and Birmingham industrialists, Alabamians have lived for generations in a racist plutocracy where spending for the public good has ranged between shameful and negligent. Recent governors starved essential services, drained rainy-day funds and distracted attention from a spiraling crisis. One day this January, facing a balanced-budget requirement and an immediate $675 million revenue shortfall, Riley told of spending the previous night in bed with his three predecessors' State of the State speeches. "Have you ever seen the movie *Groundhog Day*?" he wondered upon awakening. "Until we make...fundamental changes...we're going to be having this debate ten, fifteen, twenty years from now."

Riley's crusade has angered many former supporters and split the state's Republican Party into old- versus new-economy factions. Leading the opposition is the CEO of SouthTrust, a regional holding company with the largest assets of any Alabama-based bank; the Alabama Forestry Association; and the Alabama Farmers Federation—powerful organizations dominated by large landowners and transnational wood and paper companies. These are the prime beneficiaries of the existing property-tax structure. Trees cover more than 70 percent of Alabama, and forestry is the state's leading industry, yet taxes on forest land make up less than 2 percent of all property-tax income. On board with the governor are the mainline religious denominations, the powerful teachers association, African-American elected officials, the state's major newspapers, new technology businesses and manufacturers with desires for a more educated work force, Alabama Power and the antipoverty coalition Alabama Arise. The national Christian Coalition, which knew Riley in Congress, supports the amendment, while the Alabama chapter is staunchly opposed. Although they have the most to gain from Amendment One, many poor and working-class white Alabamians oppose it, harboring antigovernment hostility that remains part of the bitter legacy of George Wallace. They are egged on by local talk-radio clones of Limbaugh and Hannity, and by a media misinformation campaign. African-Americans, a quarter of the electorate, will play a major role; almost all voted against Riley but are now doing double takes.

Going into the final week trailing in the polls, the Riley coalition is warning of budgetary chaos and deep layoffs if Amendment One fails. The "Vote Yes" forces are turning to the state's most popular celebrity, Ruben Studdard, whose sweet style of soul singing pours Southern comfort on black and white alike, and who will headline "Believe in Alabama" concerts in Birmingham and Mobile. Outside the state, the impending election is raising conservative anxiety, lest a movement demanding that the wealthy

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pay their fair tax share spreads from this unlikely epicenter. A vicious *Wall Street Journal* editorial has accused the governor of "aping the worst kind of liberal demagoguery."

Alabama is breaking apart; when and how it comes together again is anybody's guess. But by midnight September 9 we should learn how many Alabamians seized the historic moment and how many were homesick for their house of cards. ALLEN TULLOS

Allen Tullos teaches American studies at Emory University in Atlanta, where he is writing a book about his home state of Alabama.

Venezuela's Recall

Venezuela appeared to take a couple of steps closer to a recall referendum on the presidency of Hugo Chávez in recent weeks, but there is little chance that he will be removed by electoral means. This is not because, as major US and Venezuelan media have alleged, Chávez is a "dictator" or "antidemocratic" but because the opposition is unlikely to muster the votes that would be needed to remove him.

In fact, Chávez has played by the rules since he was first elected in 1998, as former President Jimmy Carter has noted. But Venezuela's opposition has tried several times to remove him by extralegal efforts, including a short-lived military coup in April 2002—initially supported by the Bush Administration—and a sixty-four-day oil strike and business lockout this past December to February.

August 19 marked the halfway point in Chávez's term, making him eligible for recall under Venezuela's new (2000) Constitution. The opposition promptly turned in petitions that, they claimed, held 3 million signatures, asking for a recall referendum. The Supreme Court selected a five-person National Electoral Council to oversee the process, and their choices were welcomed by both sides.

But most of the signatures were gathered in February, when opposition leaders had no interest in a constitutional solution and were trying to topple the government by crippling the economy. Their petitions demanded a "nonbinding" referendum on whether Chávez should resign. It's doubtful such petitions would be valid for a recall vote. Even assuming the opposition could gather the required 2.5 million valid signatures, the Constitution requires more than a simple majority to win; opponents would need more than the absolute number of votes that Chávez received in the last election, which he won with a 60 percent majority. If they get all that, the opposition only wins a new election. And most observers believe Chávez would win if he's allowed to run, even in the unlikely event that opposition leaders could agree on a single candidate.

The government has begun to highlight its achievements, especially in the areas of increased access for the poor to healthcare and education. Most impressive is an 18.2 percent decline in the infant mortality rate during Chávez's term of office, according to the latest health ministry data. School enrollment has increased by 1.3 million children, helped by the provision of free breakfast and lunch to poor children, and the elimination of fees. Because of these commitments to the poor, Venezuela's Human Development Index—a UN measure of quality of life—reversed its decline and rose between 1999 and 2002. This came despite falling national income, which is expected to drop by more than 10 percent this year.

The opposition will focus on blaming Chávez for the steep recession. This is a difficult case to make on economic grounds, since it is mostly attributable to the economic devastation caused by the opposition's oil strike, as well as capital flight by business owners and wealthy citizens. But it will be helped by the fact that the private media are almost all controlled by the opposition and have abandoned the norms of modern journalism. (Imagine Gray Davis facing recall with ABC, NBC, CBS, Fox News, CNN, as well as most radio and the *Los Angeles Times* and *San Francisco Chronicle*, all acting as daily advocates for the Republican right.)

Washington has weighed in, too. Bush Administration officials, embarrassed by their support for the military coup, have quietly endorsed the recall election. They have also cut off US Export-Import Bank credits to Venezuela and renewed complaints that Venezuela is not helping their "counterterrorism" and "anti-drug" efforts in Colombia.

Chávez has made some mistakes—mostly in the realm of rhetoric, giving his enemies ammunition by such things as his overly public displays of affection for Fidel Castro. But his core base among Venezuela's poor majority has kept his approval ratings between 34 and 40 percent in recent months. This is amazingly high under the circumstances: In Peru, where the economy is growing and the media do not belong to the opposition, President Alejandro Toledo polls 11 percent. Still, with most of the Venezuelan opposition and the State Department committed to getting rid of Chávez by any means necessary, it's unlikely that the recall process will resolve Venezuela's conflict. MARK WEISBROT

Mark Weisbrot is co-director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research, in Washington, DC (www.cepr.net).

CALVIN TRILLIN

A Short Conversation With a Sissy-Hawk on the Possibility of a Quagmire

"The nerve! Not so! That word still rankles."
"You're sinking. I can't see your ankles."
"The thugs are here; we now just squeeze."
"Excuse me: It's above your knees."
"We planned all this; it's no surprise."
"There's nothing showing 'neath your thighs."
"With terrorists brute force works best."
"I think the mud's now at your chest."
"To show our strength, we have to drub
These . . .Arab . . . glub, glub, glub, glub, glub."

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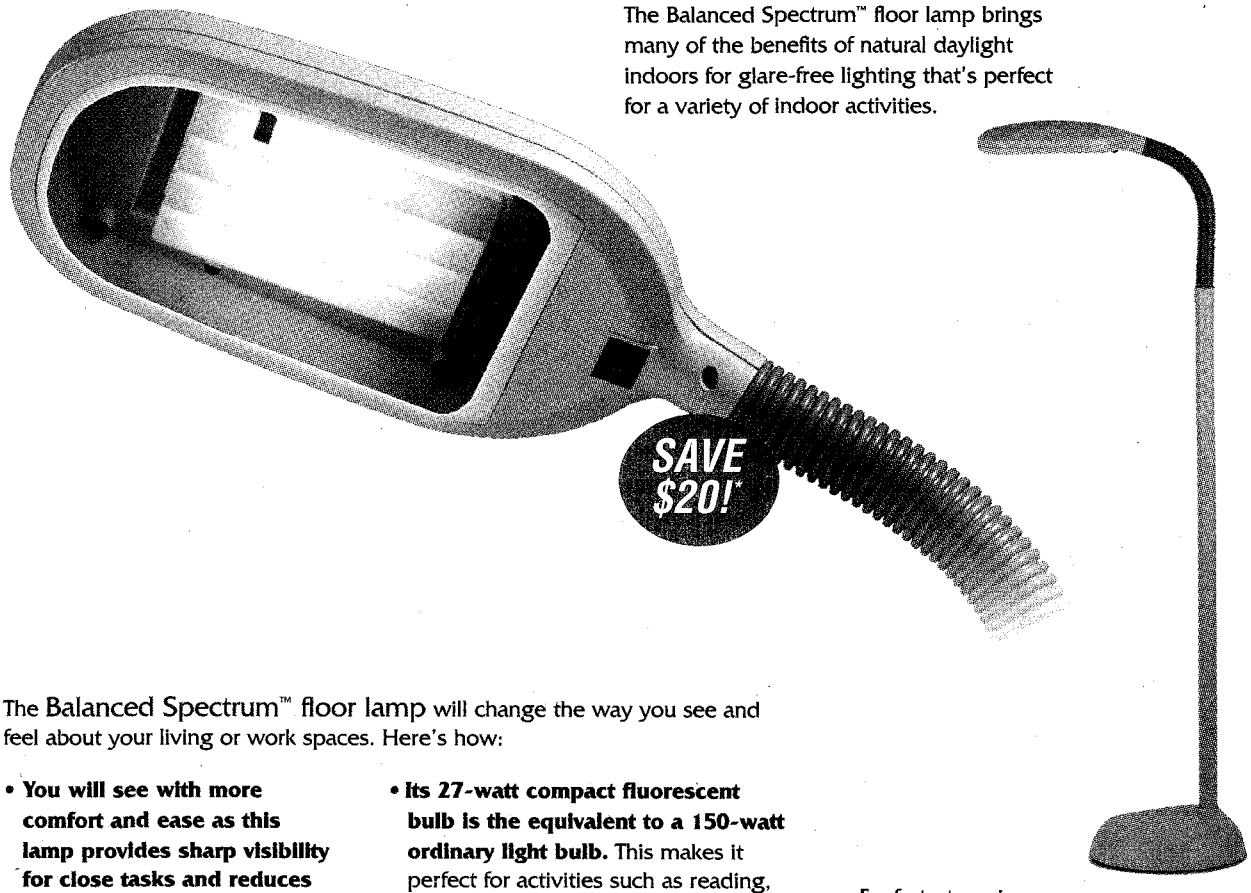

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JONATHAN SCHELL

The Importance of Losing

The basic mistake of American policy in Iraq is not that the Pentagon—believing the fairy tales told it by Iraqi exile groups and overriding State Department advice—forgot, when planning "regime change," to bring along a spare government to replace the one it was smashing; not that, once embarked on running the place, the Administration did not send enough troops to do the job; not that a civilian contingent to aid the soldiers was lacking; not that the Baghdad museum, the Jordanian Embassy, the United Nations and Imam Ali mosque, among other places, were left unguarded; not that no adequate police force, whether American or Iraqi, was provided to keep order generally; not that the United States, seeking to make good that lack, then began to recruit men from the most hated and brutal of Saddam's agencies, the Mukhabarat; not that, in an unaccountable and unparalleled lapse in America's once sure-fire technical know-how, Iraq's electrical, water and fuel systems remain dysfunctional; not that the Administration has erected a powerless shadow government composed in large measure of the same clueless exiles that misled the Administration in the first place; not that the Administration has decided to privatize substantial portions of the Iraqi economy before the will of the Iraqi people in this matter is known; not that the occupation forces have launched search-and-destroy operations that estrange and embitter a population that increasingly despises the United States; not that, throughout, a bullying diplomacy has driven away America's traditional allies.

All these blunders and omissions are indeed mistakes of American policy, and grievous ones, but they are secondary mistakes. *The main mistake of American policy in Iraq was waging the war at all.* That is not a conclusion that anyone should have to labor to arrive at. Something like the whole world, including most of its governments and tens of millions of demonstrators, plus the UN Security Council, Representative Dennis Kucinich, Governor Howard Dean and this magazine, made the point most vocally *before* the fact. They variously pointed out that the Iraqi regime gave no support to Al Qaeda, predicted that the United States would be unable to establish democracy in Iraq by force—and that therefore no such democracy could serve as a splendid model for the rest of the Middle East—warned that "regime change" for purposes of disarmament was likely to encourage other countries to build weapons of mass destruction, and argued that the allegations that Iraq already had weapons of mass destruction and was ready to use them at any moment (within forty-five minutes after the order was delivered, it was said) were unproven. All these justifications for the war are now on history's ash heap, never to be retrieved—adding a few largish piles to the mountains of ideological claptrap (of the left, the right and what have you) that were the habitual accompaniment of the assorted horrors of the twentieth century.

Recognition of this mistake—one that may prove as great as the decision to embark on the Vietnam War—is essential if the best (or at any rate the least disastrous) path out of the mess is to be charted. Otherwise, the mistake may be compounded, and such indeed is the direction in which a substantial new body of opinion now pushes the United States. In this company are Democrats in Congress who credulously accepted the Bush Administration's arguments for the war or simply caved in to Administration pressure, hawkish liberal commentators in the same position and a growing minority of right-wing critics.

They now recommend increasing American troop strength in Iraq. Some supported the war and still do. "We must win," says Democratic Senator Joseph Biden, who went on *Good Morning America* to recommend dispatching more troops. His colleague Republican John McCain agrees. The right-wing *Weekly Standard* is of like mind. Others were doubtful about the war at the beginning but think the United States must "win" now that the war has been launched. The *New York Times*, which opposed an invasion without UN Security Council support, has declared in an editorial that "establishing a free and peaceful Iraq as a linchpin for progress throughout the Middle East is a goal worth struggling for, even at great costs." And, voicing a view often now heard, it adds, "We are there now, and it is essential to stay the course." Joe Klein, of *Time*, states, "Retreat is not an option."

"Winning," evidently, now consists not in finding the weapons of mass destruction that once were the designated reason for fighting the war but in creating a democratic government in Iraq—the one that will serve as a model for the entire Middle East. Condoleezza Rice has called that task the "moral mission of our time." Stanford professor Michael McFaul has even proposed a new Cabinet department whose job would be "the creation of new states." The Pentagon's job will be restricted to "regime destruction"; the job of the new outfit, pursuing a "grand strategy on democratic regime change," will be, Houdini-like, to pull new regimes out of its hat. On the other hand, the Center for Strategic and International Studies, which recently produced a report on the situation in Iraq, thinks a big part of the problem is bad public relations and counsels "an intense communications and marketing campaign to help facilitate a profound change in the Iraqi national frame of mind."

These plans to mass-produce democracies and transform the mentalities of whole peoples have the look of desperate attempts—as grandiose as they are unhinged from reality—to overlook the obvious: First, that people, not excluding Iraqis, do not like to be conquered and occupied by foreign powers and are ready and able to resist; and, second, that disarmament, which is indeed an essential goal for the new century, can only, except in the rarest of circumstances, be achieved not through war but through the common voluntary will of nations. It is not the character of the occupation, it is occupation itself that the Iraqis are, in a multitude of ways, rejecting.

The practical problem of Iraq's future remains. The Iraqi state has been forcibly removed. That state was a horrible one; yet a nation needs a state. The children must go to school; the trains must run; the museums must open; murderers must be put in jail. But the United States, precisely because it is a single foreign state, which like all states has a highly self-interested agenda of

(Continued on Page 30)

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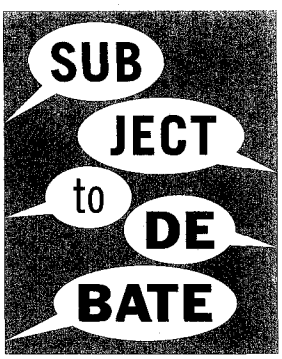
KATHA POLLITT

Stacked Decalogue



The 5,300-pound hunk of granite carved with the Ten Commandments has been rolled out of Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore's Montgomery courtroom to gather moss in an unspecified back room. According to a Gallup poll, 77 percent of Americans think the rock should have been allowed to remain; many are hopping mad at Alabama Attorney General William Pryor, only yesterday the darling of the religious right and the object of an ongoing Senate filibuster against his nomination to an appellate court, because Pryor reluctantly agreed to do his job and enforce a federal court order to have the monument removed. As *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof loves to remind his readers, Americans are big believers—the virgin birth (83 percent), creationism (48 percent), the devil (68 percent). Forty-seven percent think the Antichrist is on earth *right now*. How many of these devotees, though, have actually read the Ten Commandments lately? There's a reason the laws inscribed on those stone tablets are often represented by Roman numerals or squiggles. As a vague wave in the direction of law and order, the Decalogue pops up in thousands of public places, including the Supreme Court building, where Moses shares a frieze with Hammurabi and Justinian. Spelled out in all their ancient splendor, though, the commandments are a decidedly odd set of directives to be looming, physically or spiritually, over an American courtroom.

Consider Commandment One: God identifies himself as God—as if you didn't know! Who else crashes about with thunder and lightning? He reminds the Jews that he brought them out of Egypt and orders that "thou shalt have no other gods before me." What does that mean, exactly? No other gods, period, or no other gods come first? No other gods because they don't exist, or no other gods because they are minor and inferior and God doesn't like them? His need for constant reassurance is one of God's more perplexing characteristics. If you had created the universe and everything in it down to the seven-day week, would you care if people believed in you? Wouldn't it be enough that you knew you existed? Why can't God give anonymously? So what if people give Baal or Ishtar the credit?

In any case, God's status anxiety has precious little to do with the civil and criminal codes of the state of Alabama, where worshiping Baal and Ishtar is legal. Commandments Two, Three and Four continue God's preoccupation with himself. No graven images, indeed, no "likeness" of anything in nature, to which he holds the copyright; no taking his name in vain; no work on the Sabbath. Representational art and sculpture, swearing a blue streak and working on Saturday (or, in Alabama, Sunday) are all legal; nor does the law require that we honor our fathers and mothers as enjoined in the Fifth Commandment, despite God's barely veiled threat of death and/or exile if we sass them. Adultery is legal (well, actually, not in Alabama), as is coveting your neighbor's house, wife, servants, livestock—or husband, a possibility God seems either not to have considered or not to have minded. In fact, the only activities banned by the Ten Commandments that are also crimes under American law are murder, theft and perjury. But those are illegal (I'm guessing) under just about every civil and religious code. Even Baal and Ishtar presumably took a dim view of them.

What sets the Ten Commandments apart is not content but style: that gloomy, vengeful, obsessive, insecure authorial voice, alternately vulnerable (he confesses he's "jealous") and dissociated (he talks about himself in the third person, like an American celebrity). As elsewhere in the Bible, God looks constantly over his shoulder at the competition, threatens to visit the sins of the father on generations yet unborn, raves against those who hate him. He is equally disturbed by killing and cursing, and is incredibly possessive (I made that tree! no copying!). Granted we all know people like this, but would you want them presiding over your trial?

When you consider that God could have commanded anything he wanted—anything!—the Ten have got to rank as one of the great missed moral opportunities of all time. How different history would have been had he clearly and unmistakably forbidden war, tyranny, taking over other people's countries, slavery, exploitation of workers, cruelty to children, wife-beating, stoning, treating women—or anyone—as chattel or inferior beings. It's not as if God had nothing more to say. The minute he's through with the Decalogue, he gives Moses a long list of legal minutiae that are even less edifying: what happens if you buy a Hebrew slave and give him a wife who has children (he goes free after six years, but you keep the rest of the family); what should happen if a man sells his daughter as a "maidservant" and her master decides he doesn't fancy her after all (he can give her to his son). God enjoins us to kill witches, Sabbath violators, disrespectful children, and people who have sex with animals, but not masters who beat their slaves to death, especially if the death takes place a day or two after the beating, because the slave is the master's "money." No wonder the good white Christians of Alabama believed the Bible permitted slavery! It does! After several chapters in this vein, with much tedious discussion of oxen and more inveighing against other gods and their benighted followers, God finally settles down to the subject closest to his heart: the precise mode in which he would like to be worshiped. He drones on for pages and pages about the tabernacle, the ark and the ephod, like a demented Bronze Age interior decorator—*golden* candlesticks, mind you, and *ten* linen curtains twenty-eight cubits long and four cubits wide, and loops around the edges, and *eleven* goat-hair curtains, maybe a little wider, and loops around their edges too. He specifies down to the last beryl the ostentatious get-up he wants his priests to wear and what animals they should sacrifice and when, and which parts of the burnt offering he likes best (the fat around the tail and liver—well, that's everyone's favorite, isn't it?); he even gives recipes for incense and priestly perfume.

Has anyone checked out Judge Moore's aftershave? ■

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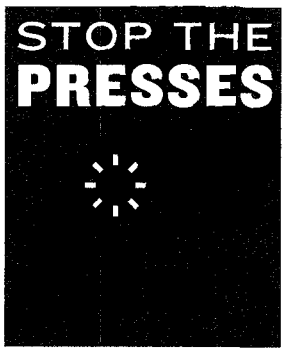
ERIC ALTERMAN

Colin Powell and 'The Power of Audacity'



One of the problems with the media coverage of this Administration is that it requires bad manners. I don't mean the kind of bad manners usually associated with reporters: shouting over one another, elbowing a colleague to get closer to one's interview subject or even quoting an anonymous source reporting that so-and-so really isn't up to the job. Rather, to be an honest, objective and fair-minded reporter of the Bush Administration's policies requires pointing out repeatedly and without sentimentality that just about all the men and women responsible for the conduct of this nation's foreign (and many of its domestic) affairs are entirely without personal honor when it comes to the affairs of state. This simply isn't done in respectable journalism, and the Bush people understand that. Arthur Miller, speaking at a Nation Institute dinner last year, termed the willingness to use this kind of knowledge "the power of audacity."

The preceding, while a bit baldly stated for most, would be considered arguable, but not outrageous, to many mainstream journalists with regard to Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld and their militant minions in the Pentagon and NSC. But what of Colin Powell? Widely considered to be a man of uncommon personal integrity and a voice of reason in presidential war councils—perhaps the only such voice—Powell remains the thin reed upon which men and women of good will here and abroad pin their ever-declining hopes. A war hero, a member of a minority who is known to be more moderate, thoughtful and generally sensible on pretty much everything than the President and the rest of those who serve him, it was Powell, after all, who fought the good fight for a multilateralist approach to foreign policy in Iraq and elsewhere.

When Powell went before the UN Security Council in February 2003, reporters treated his accusations against Saddam Hussein as if akin to tablets passed down by Moses from the mountaintop. A study by Gilbert Cranberg, former editorial page editor of the *Des Moines Register*, discovered a nearly perfect storm of wide-eyed credulity in coverage of the speech. We heard and read of "a massive array of evidence," "a detailed and persuasive case," "a powerful case," "a sober, factual case," "an overwhelming case," "a compelling case," "the strong, credible and persuasive case," "a persuasive, detailed accumulation of information," "a smoking fusillade…a persuasive case for anyone who is still persuadable," "an accumulation of painstakingly gathered and analyzed evidence," so that "only the most gullible and wishful thinking souls can now deny that Iraq is harboring and hiding weapons of mass destruction." "The skeptics asked for proof; they now have it." "Powell's evidence," we were told, was "overwhelming," "ironclad…incontrovertible," "succinct and damning…the case is closed." "Colin Powell delivered the goods on Saddam Hussein." "If there was any doubt that Hussein…needs to be…stripped of his chemical and biological capabilities, Powell put it to rest."

And yet the slightest scrutiny of the text would have revealed this certainty on the part of the Fourth Estate to be completely inappropriate. Powell employed all kinds of weasel words in his address that should have set off alarm bells in any first-year journalism student. Over and over, Cranberg notes, he attributed his charges to the likes of "human sources," "an eyewitness," "detainees," "an Al Qaeda source," "a senior defector," "intelligence sources." At a meeting at the Waldorf Astoria just before his talk, reported by the *Guardian*, Powell complained to British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw that the claims coming out of the Pentagon—particularly those made by Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz—could not be substantiated (Straw denies that the meeting took place). Powell allegedly told the Foreign Secretary that he had just about "moved in" with his intelligence staff to prepare for his speech but had left his briefings "apprehensive," fearing that the evidence might "explode in their faces." A *U.S. News & World Report* story describes the Secretary of State throwing the documents in the air and declaring, "I'm not reading this. This is bullshit!"

But the good soldier read it anyway. His worst fears would soon be realized, however, when the British Foreign Office was forced to admit that a considerable portion of its Iraq dossier—upon which Powell had decided to rely quite heavily—had been lifted, verbatim, from dated academic sources and even included a portion that was plagiarized from a journal article by an American graduate student. What's more, it turned out that the dossier did not even purport to prove what Powell insisted it did. Recently, the Hutton Commission in England discovered an e-mail from Tony Blair's chief of staff to his boss, explaining that the dossier "does nothing to demonstrate he [Saddam Hussein] has the motive to attack his neighbours, let alone the west. We will need to be clear in launching the document that we do not claim that we have evidence that he is an imminent threat." In recent weeks, Charles Hanley, an Associated Press reporter, subjected Powell's claims to thorough investigation in light of what was known at the time as well as later revelations. It is a tough-minded assessment, and just about nothing in Powell's presentation survived. (You can find it at www.commondreams.org.) Every one of those reports quoted above was, in other words—to borrow Powell's term—"bullshit."

In a truly nutty editorial published in June, *Washington Times* editors observed that "86 percent of Americans continue to be certain, or at least believe it is likely, that before the war Iraq not only had the facilities to develop weapons of mass destruction, but that it also possessed biological or chemical weapons." The editors were arguing that Americans don't care that their leaders deliberately misled them to convince them to enter this apparently never-ending quagmire, and so neither should the media. It's quite a trick: Lie to the American people and then fall back on the fact that they bought the lies to demonstrate that truth really doesn't matter anyway. It is in this and only this Alice-in-Wonderland universe that a dishonest propagandist like Colin Powell may be considered an "internationalist," a "moderate" and, sadly, a "man of honor." ■

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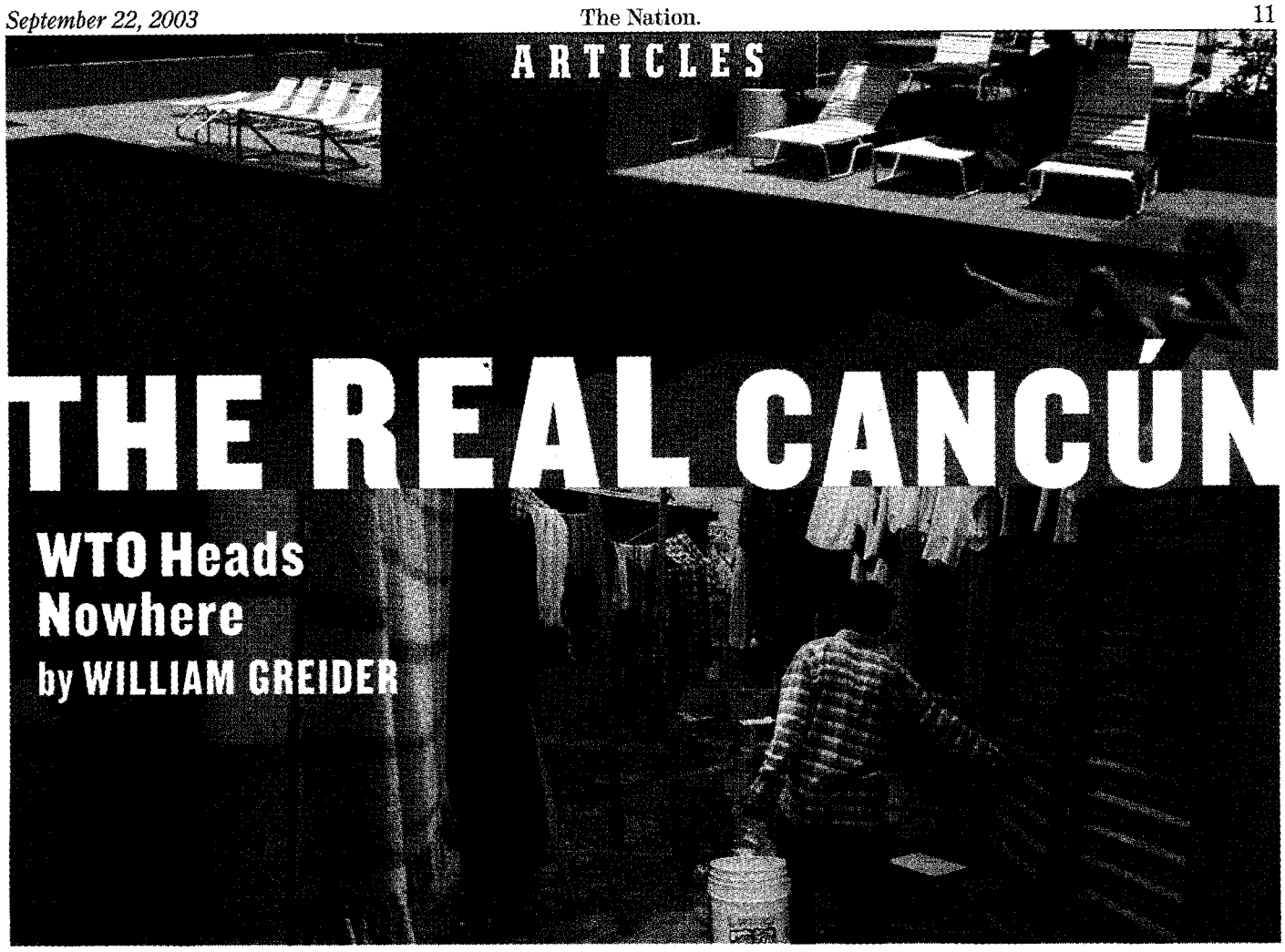

THE REAL CANCÚN

WTO Heads Nowhere

by WILLIAM GREIDER

I. A Wrong-Way World

The mighty beacon of globalization was pushed off center stage by the war on Iraq but is returning with a strangely diminished glow. Only now the all-encompassing lamp that was going to light the new millennium looks more like a flickering candle. The world's 146 trade ministers are gathering in Cancún this month with their standard declarations of great intentions. They are working on a new global agreement—the Doha Round of the World Trade Organization—dedicated to fostering greater trade and growth, liberating commerce and eradicating poverty, all the familiar pieties. Yet the lack of enthusiasm—and lack of momentum toward any agreement—is felt around the world.

Representatives of the wealthiest nations are anxious to achieve something, if only a rhetorical victory that might lighten the gloom of global investors and producers. They usually get their way in trade rounds, but great complications lie in their path. The developing countries are also desperate for concrete advances—genuine market-opening concessions from powerful nations like the United States—and the weak are gradually acquiring a stronger, more skeptical voice. But having been finessed and duped so many times in the past, the poorer nations remain quite fearful that the big boys will roll them once again amid the fiendish complexities of trade negotiating. So much has been promised for globalization, so much not delivered.

The new millennium turns out to be an inhospitable time for selling new promises about the wonders of global economic integration. The reason has nothing to do with tariff barriers or policy particulars of the Doha Round. The great engine itself—the globalized economic system—is sputtering, giving off clanking noises that suggest the machine is seriously malfunctioning. Developing countries that enjoyed robust expansion in the past decade are stalled out (with the important exception of China). But so are the industrial giants—Europe, Japan and the United States, all struggling with varying degrees of stagnation or worse.

The dynamic boom in global investing and bank lending that fueled far-flung industrialization during the nineties has tapered off dramatically. Actually, the process seems oddly reversed. Instead of the center lending capital to the developing periphery, capital is flowing back to the center—that is, the United States. Even poor nations, China in particular, are lending the United States huge quantities of surplus capital, mainly to keep America afloat as the world's buyer of last resort. If the United States falters and can no longer absorb such huge flows of exports from other nations, the entire system is in deep trouble.

This fragile condition—stagnation and the risk of worse—tends to drive nations farther apart, not closer, since governments naturally try to defend their own producers from the general downdraft. Not a good time for forging new harmony. To reach meaningful agreements at Cancún, many countries—including the United States—will have to make significant concessions that injure some folks back home, sacrificing selected domestic sectors to achieve a "greater good" for the global system

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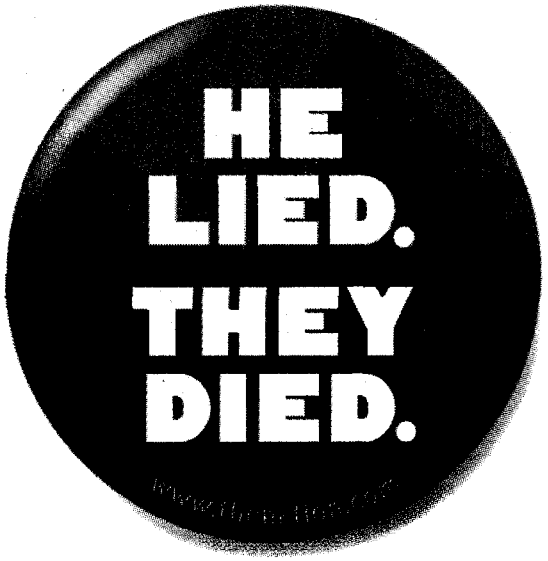

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and giving greater powers to the WTO. But profiles in courage are not on the agenda at Cancún.

Still, the globalizing imperative has enduring momentum, especially among governing elites in the United States and Europe, and so the happy talk proceeds. Driving the politics, as always, are the business and finance multinationals, whose objectives are no longer really about tariff reduction. Their principal agenda is imposing a complex set of nontrade rules covering investment, property rights and domestic sovereignty that will profoundly limit the policy choices of those countries where the factories are built, the capital invested. Leaders from the wealthiest nations keep trying to implant these rules in the WTO's authority, arguing that additional agreements must be achieved, lest globalization lose its "Big Mo."

In a more rational world, these leaders would recognize that they have the problem backward. Instead of pushing reflexively for still more trade agreements, they should be calling for an emergency summit of major economic powers to confront the far larger dangers of the stagnant global economic system, straining with deep and unsustainable imbalances. Solutions would require not only a joint commitment to major economic stimulus but also some painful adjustments among the major trading nations—greater domestic consumption by exporting nations abroad and less borrowing to buy in the indebted United States. This shift would be extraordinarily difficult to achieve in the best circumstances. Currently no one in authority, above all the US President, wishes even to acknowledge it. So the lemmings are off to Cancún.

II. Irreconcilable Differences

Economist Jagdish Bhagwati of Columbia University has been one of the most visible and resolute intellectual advocates for free-market globalization, but lately he sounds a lot like Lori Wallach, the brainy lawyer who leads Global Trade Watch. "The process of trade liberalization is becoming a sham," Bhagwati wrote recently in the *Financial Times*, "the ultimate objective being the capture, reshaping and distortion of the WTO in the image of American lobbying interests."

Wallach and other leaders of worldwide popular dissent have been making the same argument about bait-and-switch diplomacy for a decade. "Oh, absolutely," Bhagwati exclaims. "People like Lori Wallach are right." The multinational corporate interests essentially hijacked the pure "free trade" principles Bhagwati espouses and turned "free-trade agreements" into their own agenda for a densely layered legal code—investment rules that impose a straitjacket of do's and don'ts on developing-country governments.

The rights of foreign capital and corporations are to be expanded; the rights of sovereign nations to decide their own development strategies steadily eliminated. A country must not require multinationals to form joint ventures with domestic enterprises. It must not limit foreign ownership of its natural resources. National health systems, water systems and other public services must be open to privatization by foreign companies. Underdeveloped countries must, meanwhile, enforce the patent-rights system from the advanced economies to protect drugs, music, software and other "intellectual property" assets owned by wealthy industrialists. Any poor nation that dares to resist the WTO rule will face

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severe "sanctions"—huge cash penalties—and possibly de facto expulsion from the trading club.

"The developing countries are scared out of their wits now," Bhagwati says, "because they don't understand what they're being forced to sign. The agreements are going way outside the trade issues and involve a helluva lot of things like your access to oil, your access to intellectual property and capital controls.... When I looked through the investment agreements, it was worse than reading my insurance policy for the fine print. I couldn't make anything out of it, and I'm a reasonably informed person, a pretty smart economist as they go."

Exactly. Obfuscation is power. The politics of trade resembles a maliciously lopsided power play in which the wealthiest industrial nations press the weak to accede to their terms or else get nothing back at the bargaining table, and very possibly lose their access to foreign capital or development aid. Trade ministers from poor countries naturally resist, but they don't have deep squads of corporate lawyers to argue the fine points and they don't want to be the troublemaker accused of blowing up the trading system.

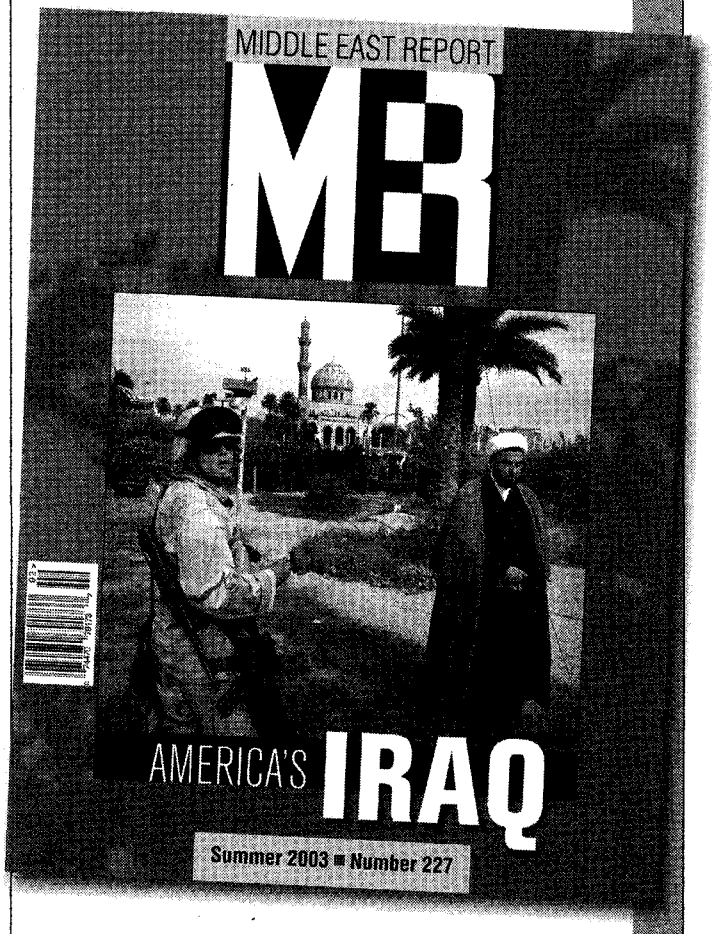
The stakes for poor nations, as Wallach explains, are enormous. "If these rules go through, that's the end of it for developing countries," she predicts. "It pulls up the ladder from them, because all the development tools the United States and Europe used in their own industrial development would be removed." Those tools include protective tariffs to shelter infant industries, directed state subsidies, controls on the inflows of foreign capital to stabilize the economy, regulatory powers over industry and many other provisions. The US government used all these measures aggressively and brilliantly during the nineteenth and early twentieth century to build the nation's economic power.

Unlike global reformers like Wallach, Bhagwati opposes labor and environmental standards in global agreements for roughly the same reason most developing countries do. They regard them as extraneous to trade and as further injuries to their sovereign discretion and comparative advantage of low wages. "Look, I am a social democrat," the Indian-born, English-educated professor insists. "I approve of unions. I am in favor of human rights and environmental values." But these matters should be developed in domestic law, not by international agreement, he argues. The advocates of the so-called social issues "have gotten onto what the business lobbies are doing and are now trying to advance their own goals through the trade agreements. And the multinationals are so keen to get markets...they're like salivating dogs, they will make concessions on labor rights and the environment, the minimum necessary, just to get you out of the way. They're a bunch of cynical bastards."

All the lobbying pressures—business and social—are sowing a new skepticism toward international agreements among the developing nations, Bhagwati warns. "The poor countries used to see multilateralism as a defense of the weak," he explains. "That's our traditional argument, remember. With multilateral institutions, we would be able to contain the big guys. But now, because all these extraneous nontrade issues are being brought in by newer and newer business lobbies, people in developing countries are beginning to feel crowded. They feel this turning into an assault on the weak—disguised as multilateralism. So I think we need to wake up."

In the run-up to Cancún, the "big guys" are pursuing a shrewd

Hard-hitting.
Clear-headed.



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divide-and-conquer strategy that co-opts individual nations (Singapore and Chile, most recently) by signing them up for "bilateral" agreements with the United States on terms that include the same restrictive investment rules the multinationals want in the next WTO agreement. "It's sort of Leninist, because they're picking off countries one by one," Bhagwati observes. This American tactic is designed to weaken the coalition of poor countries in the negotiations while creating an appearance of broader support for the multinationals' investment rules. Chile, for instance, has accepted a prohibition on capital controls even though it has skillfully employed capital controls itself over the past twenty years to engineer its successful development. Other nations may not get the chance.

From their side, developing countries are pursuing WTO issues that are genuinely about free trade—removing the protectionist barriers in the wealthiest countries for domestic agriculture and the pharmaceutical patent monopolies that impose exorbitant pricing on lifesaving medicines. More productive countries like Brazil want to eliminate the US, European and Japanese tariff barriers that block Brazilian food exports. Virtually all developing countries attack the awesome production subsidies that the advanced governments provide their domestic agriculture. The poorest nations, for instance, argue that subsidizing capital-intensive US agriculture allows agribusiness exports to underprice and destroy less advanced farming in Africa and elsewhere, while American farmers are compensated with price supports. Mexico's peasant farmers are currently being devastated in this manner by American corn, thanks to NAFTA.

Cancún, says Jagdish Bhagwati, 'will just be smoke and mirrors.... this is not the place where they will be negotiating anything.'

These agricultural issues have been on the trade agenda of poor nations for at least fifteen years, but at every turn they have been denied any real progress. The Uruguay Round, completed in 1994, did establish limits on agriculture subsidies, but the caps were set so high that the United States could continue to increase its farm subsidies enormously without any violation. Since then, the big guys have issued a running series of paper promises and formal commitments, none of which amounted to more than empty pieties. The US and EU reps issued a new declaration of intent a few weeks before Cancún—one without any hard numbers or deadlines. In other words, more words but no actual commitment.

Does anyone believe that George W. Bush intends to depart from this pattern, that is, to throw American farmers and agribusiness over the side? Brazil is a prime example of the dilemma facing US trade negotiators. If the United States proposed genuine concessions on agriculture and some industrial issues, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, Brazil's new Workers' Party president, might conceivably be persuaded to compromise on some of the other things Americans want for the WTO, and especially for the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas, in which Brazil holds the decisive position. As Wallach explains, Brazil "doesn't want US interests taking over Amazonia's timber, oil, biodiversity. It wants to protect its national health system from US HMOs. It has to insure that a grandiose WTO expansion doesn't occur at Cancún."

But—but—Lula also needs economic growth, more jobs and rising incomes, to succeed as president. Right now the Brazilian economy is stuck—stabilized but not growing. If the United States offered substantial concessions on agriculture, that would be hard to turn down. Brazil wants major reductions in the US tariffs, as high as 100 percent, blocking its citrus exports. It wants America to eliminate subsidies for soybeans and open wider the US market for Brazilian beef and other foodstuffs. The Administration rhetoric suggests these matters are ripe for serious negotiation.

But Brazil's wish list makes clear why such reforms won't happen, given President Bush's priorities. Soybeans are Missouri, Iowa and Arkansas, among other Republican-voting states. Beef is Kansas, the Dakotas and the Solid South. Oranges are Florida. Open markets for oranges would allow Brazil's abundant and efficient citrus production to devastate Florida. Karl Rove would not permit it; neither would Florida's governor, brother Jeb. Whatever gets said by the US Trade Representative, whatever declarations are issued at Cancún, count on this: There will be no agriculture deal for developing nations, not one that is real, not one that can even be whispered about, at least until long after the 2004 election.

The Doha Round is supposed to conclude in early 2005, but Bhagwati predicts it will be postponed two years and possibly longer. Cancún, he suggests, "will just be smoke and mirrors, just another guidepost in the marathon. They will have good speeches, goody-goody stuff. They will make noises in the direction of the developing countries, but this is not the place where they will be negotiating anything. This is why I'm a bit worried."

III. The Odd Couple

China is the new "bad boy" of the global economy, having displaced Japan as the aggressive emblem of a trading system ferociously out of balance. China's low-wage production is not only grabbing vast market share from other poor countries in low-end goods, but its increasing sophistication in advanced manufacturing is siphoning off millions of high-wage, high-quality jobs from advanced economies, especially that of the compliant United States. China's annual trade surplus with the United States has surpassed Japan's and now exceeds $100 billion. The US economy, meanwhile, is borrowing capital from abroad to sustain its consumption with an unsustainable appetite for debt—5 percent of GDP this year, headed for 6 percent next year.

Leading US cheerleaders for freewheeling globalization (including Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan) have begun scolding China for excessive ambitions, just as they once criticized Japan, to no avail. The National Association of Manufacturers issued a report warning that 2.3 million US manufacturing jobs have disappeared since 2000, largely due to international competition (not entirely from China). The United States risks losing "critical mass" in manufacturing, says the NAM. A Defense Department technology-advisory group confirmed that so much "intellectual capital and industrial capability" has been moved offshore, particularly in microelectronics, that the Pentagon is dangerously dependent on foreign producers to make its high-tech weaponry. *Fortune* lamented further that the lost American jobs now include upscale, college-educated occupations—software design, accounting, electrical engineering. When labor leaders

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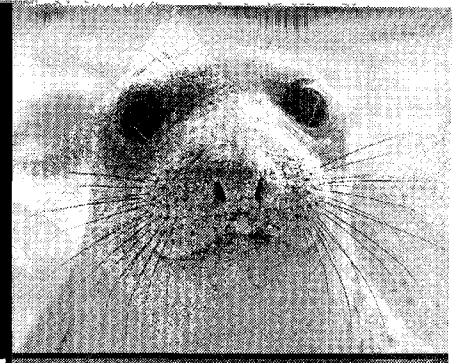

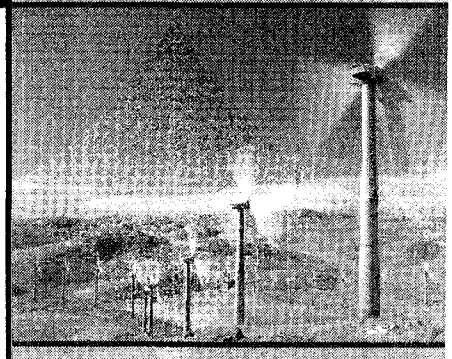

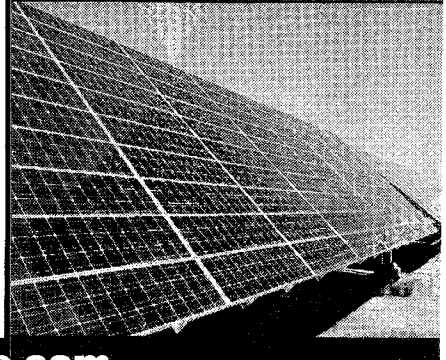

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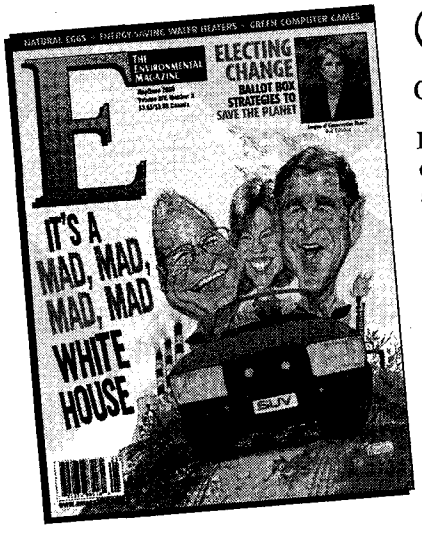
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protested devastating losses of blue-collar jobs, they were dismissed as protectionist. But losing high-tech "brain work" wasn't what the cheerleaders had in mind.

There is one other embarrassing reality the globalizers don't wish to mention: China is also now America's leading creditor. Building up huge reserves of surplus capital, China pumps much of the money into loans back to America in the form of US Treasury bonds. China now holds $290 billion in US government debt, more than any other foreign lender, according to Chen Zhao of the Bank Credit Analyst Research Group. "The flow of Chinese savings has enabled Americans to borrow and spend more," he explained in the *Financial Times*. "China is glad to see Americans going on another shopping spree. Its factories are cranking up production at an unprecedented pace.... China's exports to the U.S. jumped 35 percent in the first quarter" compared with the first quarter of 2002.

China and America are thus bound together in a very odd relationship—the poor country lends hundreds of billions to the world's largest economy so that affluent Americans can keep buying the poor country's goods—goods typically produced in the offshore factories built by America's own companies. If this seems a monstrous anomaly, it is actually the logical outcome of how US-led globalization functions. This recycling of capital and goods didn't start with China, though China represents the most extreme example. Elite experts claim it is a "virtuous circle" in which everyone benefits, but that is American hubris. Their reasoning ignores the essential transaction: China winds up with the accumulated profits. The United States winds up with the accumulated debt.

'The world has to stand up and say, It's not China, it's all of us. This is a global industrial problem.' —economist Stephen Roach

In present circumstances, this producer-debtor relationship looks like a dangerous tripwire, in which either China's financial excesses could ignite an endgame crisis for the United States or—vice versa—America's excesses could spill over as a crisis for China and the world trading system. Cassandras (like myself) have argued for some years that America's negative balance sheet—buying more than it produces and borrowing to do so—will eventually force an ugly reckoning. With its ever-swelling trade deficits, the moment of painful adjustment draws closer, but the debt cycle is unlikely to stop until creditor nations conclude that the US debt position is too dangerous and start withholding their capital. Alternately, if China's overheated economy gets mired in financial disorder or inflationary pressures, it might need to bring its capital home—thus pulling the plug on American consumers and the "buyer of last resort" for the global system at large.

Nobody knows when or how this may occur. Morgan Stanley economist Stephen Roach foresees the moment approaching when US gross national savings turns negative, and that could be "the flashpoint that sends a wake-up call to world financial markets." The dollar falls sharply, the US economy sinks into a deep, unambiguous recession and so does the world. Roach wants nations to call a global summit that confronts the danger and accepts that the basic problem is in the system's out-of-whack design, not the overreaching desires of poor nations like China.

"The world has to stand up and say, It's not China, it's all of us," Roach explains. "This is a global industrial problem. Sixty percent of the Chinese export growth is not China. It's coming from all the multinationals that put production in China—Western companies, European, Japanese, American. This is big stuff. A big change is coming, I don't know when."

What might world leaders do if they had the courage to act before crisis engulfs the system? As an economist, Roach describes the imbalance as a simple accounting problem. Americans must consume less and save more, while export-led economies must do the opposite—shift more of their national savings into domestic consumption, including for the purchase of more American-made exports. His description is accurate as far as it goes but skips over the hard part—how to get there in present circumstances. If US consumption were severely restrained right now, the economy would crater, but so would those of Europe, Japan, China and the rest of the world. "Americans aren't going to like that," Roach acknowledges. "But bad as it will be for Americans, this situation will seem truly awful in the rest of the world."

A less brutal, more politically plausible response requires a two-stage strategy—first, a shared agenda of economic stimulus to restore global growth, but accompanied by enforceable commitments to reduce the exporting nations' lopsided reliance on the US market once stable growth is restored. In other words, the United States has to acknowledge its weakness (not an easy pill for Washington egotists to swallow), but America must also be prepared to force the issue of its swelling trade deficits; that is, to employ emergency measures that do indeed reduce the US dependency whether other nations wish to cooperate or not. The mere mention of such trade measures would stun the world—and might convince trading partners that the old order is truly dead.

Even with global agreement, this strategy will take years to fulfill, because it requires virtually every economic power, starting with America, to reverse long-used practices of industrial policy. The global factories exist. Realigning global production to insure more balanced trading relations cannot be achieved by simply lowering the US dollar or punishing a few outstanding economies like China's. US trade policy was born in the cold war, when national-security strategy encouraged a generous flow of economic subsidies to allies. That rationale, long out of sync with reality, requires our trading partners to grow up a bit, while Americans experience some belt-tightening too. Above all, the governing elites have to abandon the fiction that what's good for US multinationals is good for the US economy. It ain't necessarily so.

American politics is not ready to face the bad news—neither probably are the American people. And the Bush presidency, founded on false triumphalism, is certainly not going to disturb the myth of America as the supreme economic powerhouse. Perhaps the best we can hope for right now is that a few brave voices, maybe among the Democratic candidates, will begin the hard task of truth-telling. Globalization is papered over with so many fallacies that any politician who describes reality risks ridicule. Nevertheless, the country badly needs to hear the truth. Win or lose, a politician who finds the courage to shatter failed myths is

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admired in the long run, remembered as a true statesman.

Frankly, having described what I think ought to happen, I am most doubtful that it will. Deep, wrenching shifts in political thinking do not usually occur without lots of painful friction first. I expect US elites and others around the world will have to see some strong, bloody evidence that their system is broken before they'll act. We can be sure of this much: None of these grave matters will be discussed at Cancún. ■

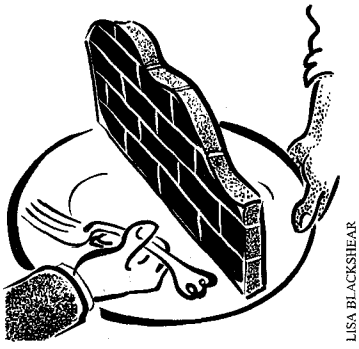
IN 'THE OTHER' CANCÚN, TOURIST-INDUSTRY WORKERS LIVE IN POVERTY AND SQUALOR.

Behind Globalization's Glitz

MARC COOPER

Cancún, Mexico

Hardly a day has gone by in the past month without the local press running a front-page panic story—sometimes two or three—warning of an impending invasion of what are routinely called *globalifobicos*, or globaphobes. A favorite international convention site, Cancún will host the Fifth World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference on September 10–14, and something like 20,000 people are expected to stage a series of protests and marches—demonstrations the local tabloids giddily predict will turn into a south-of-the-border version of the 1999 Battle of Seattle [see Tania Molina Ramírez, page 18].



LISA BLACKSHEAR

The protest agenda is long and complex, but the demonstrators can all agree on one point: Cancún itself is one of the world's most dramatic showcases of the gross inequities of the global economic system. The WTO—the controversial agency that sets the rules of international trade—certainly didn't intend it to be this way. But when the demonstrators are asked by reporters why they're rallying and marching, they'll be able simply to point to the city around them. "Cancún is a prime example of a type of foreign investment and a type of development without any rules to protect the work force, the environment, or to guarantee public services," says Fernanda Castejon of the Mexico office of the antihunger group Oxfam. "Cancún is everything that should not be done when it comes to economic models. If the goals of an expanded WTO are ever achieved, the world will be full of Cancúns."

It's not only the widening gulf between rich and poor that's on vivid display in Cancún. In an ironic twist, some of the wealthier "haves"—the same entrepreneurs who have long profited from Cancún's rich natural resources and cheap and abundant labor—now also find themselves threatened by the hurricane forces of globalization.

This beach resort of 100 luxury hotels crowded onto a narrow thirteen-mile sandbar sits strategically perched on the northern tip of the Yucatán Peninsula, making it the Caribbean tourist destination most accessible to the greatest number of US cities. That's no doubt the primary reason Mexican government planners conducting computerized surveys chose this site for tourist development thirty-five years ago—a time when Cancún was uninhabited swamp, everglade and jungle.

Now drawing almost 3 million visitors a year to its white sands, 85-degree turquoise seas and no-rules cantinas, this city that was built from scratch is the most popular vacation spot in Mexico. While still a distinct minority among the visitors, the number of domestic—Mexican—tourists continues to grow. One reason is rapidly falling hotel prices. But other cultural observers say, wryly, that the reason for Cancún's increasing popularity among Mexicans is that coming here is sometimes the easiest, no-hassle way for Mexicans to "leave Mexico" for a weekend or so.

Indeed, finding a small, family-run Mexican *taqueria* or *panaderia*—a taco stand or a traditional bakery—is much easier in downtown Los Angeles or Chicago than it is in Cancún. This city, or at least its heavily trafficked hotel zone—"a mirage," as Castejon calls it—is neither Mexico nor even an extension of the United States. It is a place that floats suspended in its own unique physical, psychological and commercial space—a sort of globologoland. Even the hordes of American college sophomores who invade by the thousands during spring break and carouse from one all-you-can-drink bar to another are sometimes surprised to find that Cancún is more like home than home itself. Pizza Hut, McDonald's, Subway, KFC, TGI Friday's, Outback and many other US franchise outlets occupy most of the hotel zone's commercial space. Cancún's street life, especially at night, seems to center on the Forum by the Sea mall, anchored by the Hard Rock and Rainforest Cafes. A double scoop of ice cream in a waffle cone at the mall's Häagen-Dazs store costs $7.50—more than in Miami or Manhattan.

Tourists might be surprised to hear that's twice the daily minimum wage—which is what is paid to many workers who toil in the glittering hotels—in this Mexican state of Quintana Roo. Not that there's much contact between the tourists and the 700,000 Mexicans who live in and around Cancún. A de facto economic and social apartheid keeps the two worlds of Cancún—the served and the server—quite distant except when conducting necessary business. "I've worked here twenty-two years, and never once have I been able to bring my kids to this beach," complains Sonia, a middle-aged single mother of two who serves drinks and

Contributing editor Marc Cooper is a senior fellow at the Institute for Justice and Journalism at the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Southern California.

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snacks to sunbathers at a four-star oceanfront hotel. She earns 50 pesos a day (about $4.50), sometimes tripled by tips. "Employees and their families are simply not allowed to use the facilities," she says. "We're prohibited."

"Go just about anywhere in the world and the city, its streets, its markets, its people, are all part of the tourist attraction. Yet, here in Cancún, they hide it," says Araceli Dominguez, a leader of the local environmental-action group known as GEMA. Hiding it might be somewhat of an exaggeration. But certainly the bulk of foreign tourists hardly know of the existence of the actual city of Cancún, legally known as the municipality of Benito Juarez.

The gritty downtown sits immediately adjacent to the hotel zone. Even here small local business has been pushed out by big-box franchises, including two Wal-Marts, a Sam's Club and an Office Max. The inner rings of the city consist of graffiti-covered tenements—incubators of a robust coca-driven youth-gang culture. This is Cancún's Soweto, the ghetto dormitories that house many of the tourist industry's impoverished workers. Behind most of the grim cinder-block houses stand cramped, low-ceiling, add-on structures with tin roofs, wood-slat walls and earthen or concrete floors. Little more than human stalls, these *cuarterias*—little rooms—are illegally rented out by the day or month to the 40,000 or so mostly Mayan construction and hotel workers who commute into Cancún from their rural villages and go back home on weekends or once a month. "Cancún's development has caused the disintegration of the whole Mayan region instead of its development," says Araceli Dominguez. She and other critics complain that while billions have been invested by international capital in the resort hotels, almost nothing is spent on those who work in them.

The water system was privatized a decade ago, but with deference to the tourist hotels; many in Benito Juarez have running water only three or four hours a day. The 1994 implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement has also contributed to the collapse of local services. Job-seeking subsistence farmers, bankrupted by the import of cheap American corn, have flooded Cancún, accelerating what was already explosive and chaotic growth. Today, about half the residents are not connected to the sewer system, and local groundwater has turned toxic.

Some tourist-industry workers live a bumpy, hourlong bus ride from the hotels in places like Colonia Avante, a crude settlement in front of a modern Coca-Cola bottling plant and nestled

Marching on Cancún

Mexico City

Peasants, punks, students, green activists, union workers, social leaders and many more will meet in Cancún to say no to the WTO. The Zapatista Army has also announced it will participate in some way. As the main movement that unites diverse social forces, the Zapatistas, by their announcement, gave a vital push to the organization of opposition to the WTO gathering. The Zapatista Army was the first movement in the world to speak out against global neoliberalism when it appeared publicly for the first time in January 1994—not coincidentally the same day NAFTA was implemented.

"We are against the WTO because they want to patent our products, because they want to privatize our resources," says Mayan peasant leader Pedro Dzib of UNORCA (National Union of Autonomous Regional Farmer Organizations—a Mexican member of the international network Vía Campesina). "We cannot allow them to privatize CFE [the Federal Electricity Commission], we cannot allow them to flood our market with foreign grains just because theirs are cheaper." Dzib reflects the feelings of millions of peasants and small farmers who have seen prices for their products fall dramatically as a result of NAFTA—and who see the WTO as an expansion of NAFTA.

During the weeks leading up to Cancún, members of UNORCA have been busy informing peasant communities about the WTO ministerial conference and its implications for their lives. Not a hard job, as peasants are living the consequences of NAFTA every day. "They may not understand the macroeconomic details, but they know something is going wrong," says Victoria Santos, technical director of the Organization of Communal Forest Producers of the Maya Region.

Tens of thousands of farmers are willing to go to Cancún, according to UNORCA leader Alberto Gómez, but only a few can afford the trip. Students, punks, workers and artists are in the same situation. Cancún is the most expensive tourist destination in the country—a twenty-three-hour Mexico City–Cancún bus ride costs about $100. So all over the country activists are focused on informing people about the WTO and raising money. Vía Campesina and UNORCA have set up a fundraising campaign at www.unorca.org.mx and expect to mobilize about 10,000 peasants, mainly from communities near Cancún.

Planned activities in Cancún include a Convergence of Independent Media, an international reunion of fishermen, concerts, mass demonstrations, international forums (on globalization, agriculture, workers, ecology and "of the people"—mainly NGOs) and an International Fair on Fair Trade. For those who won't be able to make it, UNORCA–Vía Campesina and other organizations have planned activities in at least twenty-six Mexican states, especially on the southern and northern borders, where they will attempt to let people in without asking for papers and stop multinational trailer-trucks.

Activists agree that the future of social movements in Mexico depends on the outcome of the WTO protests; peasant, social and student movements are weak right now. The paradox lies in the fact that it was in southern Mexico that some of the most important seeds of the global movement were planted. "It's not just about Cancún," says Gómez. "It's about our country. What's at stake is, Which will the next step be for our society, for our teachers, our union workers, our consumers? What's at stake is our own existence as farmers—and we are going to show the world that in Mexico, there is a society that does not want to disappear."

TANIA MOLINA RAMÍREZ

Tania Molina Ramírez is a journalist at the Mexican daily La Jornada.

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around the towering pylons of a crackling high-tension electric line. As wages have fallen over the past five years and with most workers hired month to month and facing layoffs in the slow season, for many, places like this are their only choice.

The unpaved roads into Avante are so rough, the local police use sure-footed horses on their patrols. The residents live mostly in *palapas*, rough-hewn shacks made of strapped-together poles. Water is gathered from open wells. Hijacked electric power snakes through the village on a jumble of wires and cables held up by forked sticks no more than five feet off the ground. A half-mile into Avante, the pirated lines disappear, replaced by candles and oil lanterns. In the early morning hours, residents—some in their colorful corporate uniforms—stream toward the highway to catch a bus to work. Directly overhead an American Airlines 757—like a giant creature from another world—makes its approach into Cancún International Airport.

There *are* some tourist-industry workers climbing the economic ladder. New housing developments dot the city's periphery. Along dusty, unpaved but leveled roads, the more fortunate of the working-class families can buy a new, brightly painted "mini-casa" for about $16,000. Each mini-casa in a row of attached homes consists of one main room with a window, a separate shower stall and a tiny patio with a barbed-wire front fence—a total living space of 11 by 15 feet. "You live so close to one another," darkly jokes a local journalist, "that you have to cut the tails off your dogs, ask Jesus on the cross to hang his hands out the windows, and prepare for having your neighbors hear even your secrets."

Back in the air-conditioned, aptly named Restaurante California in downtown Cancún, Pepe Zuniga feels a sense of bitter personal betrayal when it comes to Cancún. As a young urban planner, he helped draft the original plans for Cancún in the early 1970s; he even named some of its streets. Now a full-time activist, he leads a network of environmental groups critical of his own creation. "The original Cancún project was sensational," he says. "A pedestrian-based town with ample green spaces, gardens and schools."

But the demand for immediate profit by investors and rampant political corruption guaranteed that Cancún would be a Frankenstein's monster from the outset. In a precursor of the free-trade policies that would be codified two decades later in agreements like NAFTA, the Mexican government made sweeping regulatory and tax concessions to investors in the nascent Cancún project. Later, investment-for-debt swaps—which gave juicy tax breaks to investors—further heated up the Cancún investment market. "In Cancún it never mattered, and it still doesn't matter, who you were or where your money came from," says local historian José Antonio Callejas. Bundles of narcodollars washed through the resort building projects. Mario Villanueva, the state governor until the late 1990s, now doing a prison term after a stint as a fugitive, built a massive political/criminal empire buoyed by the cocaine cartels while in office. That legacy still haunts Cancún. The current mayor's brother, a prominent hotel operator, has also done prison time on money-laundering charges, and experts say Cancún is still a major transit point for the drug trade.

But the biggest problem with Cancún's development is that it

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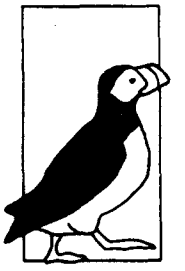

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was left solely to the whim of the market. "No one ever figured out where or how the workers would live. Better said, no one cared," Zuniga says. When the city sprouted in 1975, it had 5,000 residents, compared with its nearly 700,000 today. As impoverished job hunters poured in and found no infrastructure, they simply set up squatter villages. The dominant Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI)—which monopolized the government until three years ago—hungry for votes, capitalized on the shantytowns by legalizing them where they stood. As billions of dollars were plowed into the beach resorts, nothing went to build infrastructure for the locals. "Everyone comes here desperate to find a job," says Zuniga. Mix that with the greed of local political bosses and the result is "total urban disaster."

Cancún, he says, is the "mirror that reflects the social crisis" not only of Mexico but of the entire global South. While an average city has nine square meters of green space per inhabitant, Cancún has one and one-fifth square meters. In Jamaica, he notes, the ratio of tourist hotel rooms to industry workers is about 1 to 15. In Cancún it's 1 to 40. Local forest reserves have been sold off to private interests. Shantytowns have been built atop groundwater reserves. And now there are plans to fill in the everglades and replace them with golf courses. "The original idea was to produce a diamond, an expensive diamond that would attract development," Zuniga says. "Instead, we've seen them degrade and degrade this place, cheapening the tourism and squeezing for profits. Cancún used to sell sun, beach and relaxation. Now it sells sex, discos, alcohol and—yes—the beach. My beauty queen that I loved has been turned into a streetwalker."

'My beauty queen that I loved has been turned into a streetwalker.'
—Urban planner Pepe Zuniga

That "degrading" Zuniga refers to is very much on the minds of many local Cancún businessmen. They, too, are feeling the effects of globalization—and they don't like it. Three-fourths of Cancún's hotel capacity is owned by foreign interests—Americans, Canadians, Italians and, most notable, Spanish hotel chains. And in this industry, it's the Spanish who are making a move to dominate the local market, wringing it dry for profit, driving down prices, cutting costs and squeezing the competition. The Spanish chains have been flooding the market with "all inclusive" deals that offer tourists airfare, a luxury hotel room and all meals and tips, often for $50–$65 a day—half or less what the room alone might fetch on a market peak. This all-inclusive policy has wiped out the income of workers dependent on tips and has led to the closing of a number of restaurants and clubs.

Local leftists had a good laugh recently when newspapers ran a story quoting the usually conservative and antistatist leaders of the Cancún Hotel Association calling on the Mexican government, no less, to intervene in the market and impose price controls on resort hotel rooms—controls that would guarantee a price *floor*, not a ceiling. "It's the only way we are going to overcome this problem," says association executive Tomás Aunon—the problem being that in spite of 98 percent hotel-occupancy rates this summer, many of the Mexican-owned hotels are teetering on the brink of bankruptcy, and local suppliers say their invoices are regularly going unpaid. Already this year, ten luxury hotels have been sold off or are currently on the auction block. There's a palpable fear that Cancún may now be embarked on a downward spiral with no bottom in sight, that it might become a globalization-whipped Caribbean version of Flint, Michigan.

Those concerned about Cancún's problems can't expect any help from the government. President Vicente Fox is a big promoter of globalization, while the left-of-center Democratic Revolutionary Party, in opposition, which has criticized Cancún-style development, has been losing strength. Its vote was down to about 17 percent nationally in July's congressional elections, and it did particularly poorly in the state of Quintana Roo, dropping into single digits.

At least one Cancún businessman, 49-year-old Armando Rangel Diaz, is convinced that Cancún faces "catastrophic problems in the near future" if nothing is done. Rangel Diaz, the great-grandson of a former president of Mexico, a former industry adviser to the Mexican Congress and a longtime businessman who today owns fish-packing warehouses, is an unlikely critic of the economic system. But he's quick to call himself a "victim of globalization." His small fleet of shrimp boats was driven out of business by trade concessions to Asian corporate fleets, and he says he has painfully watched his adopted city of Cancún succumb to a lethal brew of international capital and local corruption—a formula he says is embodied in the policies of agencies like the WTO.

The crisis, he says, runs much deeper than a few greedy Spanish hotel chains. "Globalization is a process that radically undermines national projects," he says. "International capital, as you can see here in Cancún, wants to offer only enough wages, healthcare and education to guarantee a minimum of stability. It then becomes complicit with corrupt local governments. And neither side asks very much of each other. Instead they fuse into a single mafia that robs the population of its human dignity."

Two years ago, Diaz helped lead a study of the Cancún economy that detailed the radical shortcomings in its model of free-market development. "We have a $10 billion industry here, and all it does is consistently degrade the work force," he says. "Labor was brought in but never trained or upgraded. We have two miserable libraries, only two athletic fields, only four youth coaches, only six baseball diamonds, no public university, but we have public schools where the principals pocket 'registration fees.' We have half the population without sewers, but we have 7,000 liquor stores, half of them clandestine, 4,000 prostitutes who each pay the police $10 a month and 400 crackhouses that also produce about $2 million a month in police protection money. Do you think this is just? Do you think this is fair treatment by a $10 billion industry?"

The study made hundreds of concrete suggestions for reform and improvement, but he says, "We have been totally, but totally ignored. Not one of our suggestions has been implemented. The globalizers couldn't care less about sustainability or even social order. What's most important to them is competitiveness. And, damn it, if being competitive means they have to pay you $4 a day—then $4 a day is all you're going to be paid." ■

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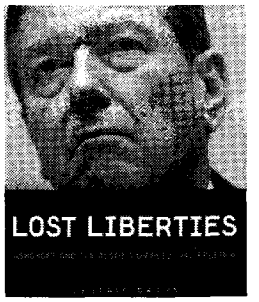

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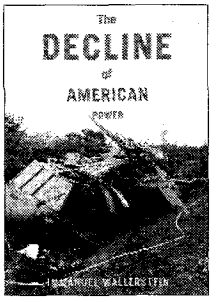

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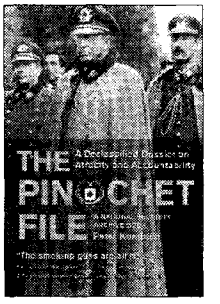

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HE'S TRYING TO TALK UP THE PATRIOT ACT, BUT AMERICANS MAY NO LONGER BE BUYING.

On the Road With Ashcroft

DAVID COLE

Attorney General John Ashcroft marked the two-year anniversary of the terrorist attacks of September 11 by launching a national publicity tour to sell Americans on the USA Patriot Act. That he felt the need to do so was itself revealing. The act is, of course, already law, and when it came to a vote just six weeks after the 9/11 attacks only a single senator (Russell Feingold) and sixty-six members of the House voted against it (even though almost no one had had time to read the 342-page bill before voting). But the act has come under increasing grassroots criticism ever since—more than 150 towns, cities and states have enacted ordinances condemning it—and the Justice Department finds itself on the defensive.

LISA BLACKSHEAR

Even more telling, however, is the fact that Ashcroft's national tour will not address the public. His speaking engagements are all before closed audiences, primarily law-enforcement officers. The choice to speak to police and exclude the people captures much of the flavor of the Administration's war on terrorism: It has repeatedly sought to maximize police power while minimizing public oversight. But that tactic may be backfiring, as the American people are starting to fight back [see David Sarasohn, page 23].

The Administration has done everything in its power to duck scrutiny of its actions. In the initial weeks after the attacks it arrested hundreds of people in secret, and it has continued to fight to keep their names secret, despite an Inspector General's report in June revealing that virtually all those arrested have been cleared of any connection to terrorism. It held secret trials for all those held on immigration charges and then staved off Supreme Court review of the practice, telling the Court that the trials had been completed and therefore there was no need to find whether the practice was constitutional (one court of appeals had declared it unconstitutional; another had upheld it).

The Administration has also opposed any judicial review of its detention of the more than 650 foreign nationals held incommunicado in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, without charges, hearings or trials. And it initially argued that American citizens declared "enemy combatants" were similarly barred from seeking court review, abandoning that view only after the courts rejected it. Now it argues that the only "review" a court can exercise vis-à-vis citizens is a highly deferential perusal of a written declaration filed by a midlevel government functionary. The courts may not hear evidence from the detainee and may not look into the declaration's statements to determine whether they're true. According to the Administration, there is literally no opportunity for a person to present evidence that would prove his innocence.

David Cole, The Nation*'s legal affairs correspondent, is the author of* Enemy Aliens: Double Standards and Constitutional Freedoms in the War on Terrorism, *published this month by the New Press.*

The Administration has invoked a similarly one-sided process in its attacks on Muslim charities. It has frozen the assets of three of the country's largest, alleging that they have ties to terrorist groups. But when one of them—the Holy Land Foundation—produced evidence showing that the government's claims were false, the government moved to keep the evidence out of court, arguing that the charity had no right to present new evidence and that the court should uphold the government's actions on its evidence alone.

The Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA), greatly expanded by the Patriot Act and heavily relied upon by the Justice Department since 9/11, is even more one-sided [see Steven Donziger, page 24]. It allows the government to conduct secret searches of "foreign agents" in criminal investigations without establishing probable cause of criminal activity, which the Fourth Amendment generally requires before a warrant can be issued. The fruits of these searches can be used in criminal trials, but the law does not permit those against whom the evidence is used access to the original search-warrant application, rendering illusory any review of the search's validity.

The Administration has also used less formal measures to limit review of its actions. It has moved three detained "enemy combatants" to South Carolina, attempting to insure that any legal challenges would be heard in the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals, the nation's most conservative. It has reportedly threatened defendants with onerous sanctions, including implications that they might be declared enemy combatants. These threats have helped prosecutors secure guilty pleas and avoid trials even where defendants have strong constitutional defenses. In Lackawanna, New York, for example, six young men who had attended an Al Qaeda training camp pleaded guilty to violating a law that another court in New York has since declared unconstitutional.

So why, given this history of secrecy and obfuscation, the sudden desire to launch a publicity tour? The Administration apparently fears the tide may be turning, and there are increasing signs its concerns are warranted. A May CBS News poll found that 52 percent of Americans were "very concerned" or "somewhat concerned" about losing their civil liberties at the hands of the Administration. Democratic presidential candidates are competing over who can criticize Ashcroft more harshly. A GOP-introduced bill to repeal the Patriot Act's "sneak and peek" authority, which allows searches without prior notification of the homeowner, passed in the House 309 to 118. A House bill to protect library and bookstore records has more than 130 sponsors, and a Senate version is likely to be introduced shortly. The ACLU and the Center for Constitutional Rights recently filed lawsuits challenging the constitutionality of parts of the act, and the February leak

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Patriots vs. the Patriot Act

When Attorney General John Ashcroft felt obliged to go out campaigning in August in defense of the USA Patriot Act, his problem wasn't just what people were saying about the act. His real problem was who was saying it. Ashcroft and the Bush Administration could dismiss complaints coming from the people George W. Bush's father liked to call "card-carrying members of the ACLU." But the wave of objection to the Patriot Act—and its offspring, Patriot Act II—is also coming from people like John Coghill (Republican, North Pole).

Coghill, a construction worker and pastor's assistant, is majority leader of the Alaska House of Representatives (his North Pole is about fourteen miles northeast of Fairbanks) and calls himself a "constitutionalist and conservative Republican." He's also co-sponsor of a measure that overwhelmingly passed the Alaska legislature—one no vote in two GOP-controlled chambers—that urges Congress to fix violations of civil liberties under the Patriot Act and resist any others, and that calls on Alaska law-enforcement agencies not to cooperate with the Feds "in the absence of reasonable suspicion of criminal activity under Alaska State law." Explains Coghill about the act, "The definition of terrorism probably is the biggest concern. It's very broad in scope. You can drive almost any criminal activity, or suspected criminal activity, into that definition." Or as his congressman, Don Young—a hard-right, anti-environmental House power whose office greets visitors with a giant Kodiak bearskin—says about the Patriot Act: "Worst act we ever passed."

Anti–Patriot Act resolutions have been passed by two other states: Hawaii and Vermont—where the resolution went unanimously through the Senate and 101–23 through a Republican-controlled House. At the end of summer, the Oregon Senate joined them, 23–2, with conservative GOP Senator Gary George declaring, "Senators from all political persuasions joined with Oregon citizens to affirm again our defense of the Constitution and Bill of Rights, and to request that the federal government rescind those portions of the Patriot Act that assault our cherished liberties." Resolutions have been adopted by 150 counties and cities, including Philadelphia.

In April, even before this surge, an ACLU forum in Washington protesting the act was joined by conservative power broker Grover Norquist, president of Americans for Tax Reform; David Keene, president of the American Conservative Union; Lori Waters, executive director of Phyllis Schlafly's Eagle Forum; and ex–GOP Representative Bob Barr of Georgia, Clinton-impeachment cheerleader. They attacked the new, secretive powers the act gives the Justice Department, and Norquist expressed a special concern: "Someday Hillary Clinton's going to be Attorney General, and I hope conservatives keep that in mind."

That prospect, or something even more chilling, may be part of what's driving the sixteen Republican House sponsors (out of 132) of the Freedom to Read Protection Act. The bill would revoke the government's new power to secretly demand people's library-borrowing and bookstore-purchase records. (The House attempted to attach an amendment cutting funds for such efforts to the State Department appropriations bill.) "If you want to write about how a terrorist can build a bomb, you shouldn't be considered a terrorist," says Republican Representative C.L. "Butch" Otter of Idaho, "and that's what the bill does." The conservative Otter—one of only three Republicans to vote against the Patriot Act in 2001—calls the bill "the first of many efforts to assuage some of the problems of the Patriot Act." He underlined that point in July, when he won an overwhelming House victory banning any spending for the act's Section 213, allowing "sneak and peak" searches without notification of the subject. Otter now sees a changed attitude in the House: "Counties, cities, libraries and folks are writing letters to members of Congress asking what's going on," he says. "A lot of folks who voted for it have started to take another look."

Among those looking hard is Republican F. James Sensenbrenner of Wisconsin, chairman of the House Judiciary Committee. This past spring, when Senate Judiciary Committee chairman Orrin Hatch suggested making all the Patriot Act's new powers—which sunset in five years—permanent, Sensenbrenner offered an alternative proposal: "Over my dead body."

Part of what's making the Patriot Act look different to so many Congress members and state legislators is a stream of protest driven by the American Library Association, which has firmly opposed the Patriot Act sections touching libraries. The association has also advised its members to speed up their electronic elimination of borrowing records, and libraries all over the country have followed this approach to making themselves more subpoena-proof. Before the Patriot Act, says Emily Sheketoff, the Washington associate executive director of the ALA, "library records were sacrosanct. The courts had recognized that there was a direct relationship between freedom of speech, privacy rights and your reading records."

Lots of Americans who don't usually consider themselves leftist activists sit on local library boards and commissions, and Washington is hearing from them. In trying to resist a Justice Department that alternates between abusing the new powers it has and demanding more, liberals could have worse allies than librarians and libertarians.

Before the Senate adjourned for the August recess, Ron Wyden, an Oregon Democrat, and Lisa Murkowski, an Alaska Republican, introduced legislation to cut the Patriot Act back sharply. The war on terror and the rights of Americans must be balanced, said Murkowski: "To date it appears portions of the Patriot Act may have moved the scales out of balance." The bill carries the endorsement of such conservative mainstays as Americans for Tax Reform, the Free Congress Foundation and the Rutherford Institute.

Democratic Senator Russell Feingold of Wisconsin was the only senator to vote against the Patriot Act, but these days he feels a lot less lonely. "It's just unbelievable how many people are concerned about this," says Feingold. "They get the feeling that these are powers that could be used to monitor *them*." It turns out a lot of conservatives don't like that either. And John Ashcroft has had to notice.

DAVID SARASOHN

David Sarasohn is associate editor of The Oregonian *in Portland.*

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The Twilight-Zone Court

The attacks of September 11, 2001, ushered in a multitude of legal transformations that restrict civil liberties in the name of national security. But discussion of one change that could have particularly devastating consequences has been strangely limited. It concerns the secret and mysterious Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court (FISC), which exists in a legal twilight zone with virtually no connection to the Constitution or Bill of Rights.

Since its creation twenty-five years ago, the FISC has steadily amassed more power to intrude on people's lives than any court in our history, and it has never denied a government application for a wiretap or search in more than 14,000 requests. Last year, the seven judges on the court granted almost as many warrants as the 600 or so trial judges in the entire federal judiciary.

The FISC is certainly a peculiar institution. It hears only one side of every case—the government's. No defense attorney or member of the public has ever attended one of its sessions. Its judges (expanded to eleven under the Patriot Act), who are current federal trial and appellate judges, are handpicked by Chief Justice William Rehnquist for rotating terms. A FISC appointment is prestigious; jockeying for one is described as intense. FISC decisions cannot be appealed by a defendant—not even to the Supreme Court.

How did such a court come to exist? The original idea was seen as a good-government reform. Before the FISC, which was created with bipartisan backing under the Carter Administration, the President could order a wiretap or break-in without a warrant if he unilaterally determined it was necessary for national security reasons. Because the legal authority to do so was always suspect (and because President Nixon abused this privilege by allowing the FBI to monitor thousands of Americans, including members of the White House staff), the FISC was created to check executive power by imposing standards and judicial review on this process.

From its inception, getting a warrant from the FISC was far easier than from a regular court. Probable cause was needed, but rather than requiring suspected criminal activity (as in regular courts), such a warrant needed only to allege that the target was a "foreign power" or "agent" of one. This exception to the probable-cause requirement of the Fourth Amendment was considered acceptable because warrants were supposed to be limited to the gathering of foreign intelligence information, not for prosecution in a regular criminal court. Most intended targets were foreign embassies and their personnel. Only Americans believed to be engaged in espionage or in contact (even if innocuous) with an intelligence target could be monitored without Fourth Amendment protections.

This changed dramatically in the mid-1990s. Congress expanded the FISC to authorize not only electronic surveillance but also physical searches of people's homes. Armed with an FISC warrant, FBI agents could now break into private homes and never tell the occupants they had been there, thus foreclosing any possible court challenge to the warrant (you can't challenge an illegal break-in if you don't know it happened). Evidence gathered with FISC warrants also was increasingly used to prosecute people in criminal court on charges that had little or nothing to do with national security; at least a few dozen such cases have come through the courts in recent years.

Then came Attorney General John Ashcroft, who a few months after September 11 decided to apply the FISC to domestic criminal investigations. Now, if a run-of-the-mill domestic criminal prosecution has even the remotest "foreign" association, the Justice Department can do an end-run around the Fourth Amendment and gather evidence under the FISC. Examples of cases that might qualify: an American citizen of Arab descent suspected of any illegality, from drug-dealing to cigarette-smuggling; a political supporter of organizations like the Palestinian Authority, Sinn Fein or Greenpeace; a donor to charities that are suspect, as defined by the Justice Department.

Unsurprisingly, in a case of the fox guarding the henhouse, the FISC itself approved expansion of its powers last November. Its three-judge appeals panel, whose ideological leader, Laurence Silberman, is arguably the most hard-right activist in the federal judiciary, tore down the already weakened "wall" that had blocked intelligence agents, unbound by Fourth Amendment constraints, from sharing information with prosecutors, who are required to abide by the Fourth Amendment. The decision cannot be appealed (the ACLU filed an unprecedented motion seeking Supreme Court review, which was denied).

The FISC's newfound power may well enable the FBI—the agency that seeks the most FISC warrants—to extend the scope of its dubious practices of spying on political activists. As David Cole and James Dempsey document in their book *Terrorism and the Constitution*, the FBI has often interpreted "support for terrorism" to include peaceful humanitarian and political activities.

Congressional oversight, other than some recent low-intensity efforts by Senators Patrick Leahy and Arlen Specter to shed more light on the court's doings, has been almost nonexistent. Public disclosure to Congress is limited to an annual one-paragraph letter specifying the number of approved FISC warrants. In 2002 that number was 1,228—roughly more than double a decade ago. Given the number of warrants approved since its inception, it is likely that tens of thousands of people have been spied on or had their homes broken into without their knowledge. Also, there is discussion in the intelligence community of creating branches of the FISC in several major cities.

The Fourth Amendment is the heart and soul of a free society—"the right to be let alone," in the words of Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis. FISC operates in a parallel universe where the Fourth Amendment is essentially defunct and the right to be left alone is meaningless for those Americans targeted. Cleverly, the FISC statute uses legal nomenclature ("probable cause") and real federal judges to convey the look and feel of constitutional legitimacy. In fact, a defendant might have a better chance of being acquitted in China than in a US court using FISC evidence. The precise role of the FISC in the new antiterror legal paradigm remains to be seen—or not seen, as the case may be—but there's little question the power is there for the taking, should the Attorney General avail himself of it. Perhaps Ashcroft has done so; under the rules, we cannot know.

STEVEN DONZIGER

Steven Donziger, a lawyer in New York City, is editor of The Real War on Crime *(HarperPerennial).*

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of a Justice Department draft of "Patriot Act II" led to such widespread criticism that Ashcroft has not yet dared introduce the bill.

The Administration has also come under increasing heat for its treatment of the Guantánamo detainees. The American Bar Association has criticized hobbling restrictions on defense lawyers in the upcoming military trials, and the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers has gone even further, urging its members to refuse to serve in the trials. In August bar leaders from England, Canada, Scotland, Sweden, Northern Ireland, Australia, France and Wales published a joint letter condemning the planned military trials and demanding that the detainees be tried fairly in civilian courts.

Ashcroft's response? In addition to the speaking tour in which he will preach only to the converted, he has launched a website, www.lifeandliberty.gov, ostensibly designed to correct the "myths" surrounding the Patriot Act and to tout the Justice Department's "success" in the war on terrorism. But Ashcroft's defense fails to address most of what the public is worried about.

Public concern is not limited to the Patriot Act's four corners but arises from a whole range of measures this Administration has advanced, from secret detentions to ethnic profiling to "Total Information Awareness" and the "enemy combatant" designations. The Patriot Act has become shorthand for these excesses. Ashcroft's defense, however, ducks virtually all this criticism, focusing only on a handful of the act's provisions. He doesn't mention, for example, its most troubling sections, those affecting immigrants. They allow the government to exclude foreign nationals for their speech, to deport them on the basis of wholly innocent associations with any group Ashcroft blacklists and to lock them up on his say-so, without showing that they are dangerous or a flight risk (the only two constitutionally recognized justifications for preventive detention). Nor does he bother to defend a provision authorizing freezing of assets based on secret evidence. And his website makes only passing reference to the act's dramatic expansion of FISA power to authorize search warrants in criminal investigations without probable cause of criminal activity.

At the same time, Ashcroft's defense of the few provisions it chooses to address is highly misleading. In response to criticism of Section 215, for example, which allows the government to demand access to library and bookstore records without probable cause, Ashcroft claims that this authority has always been available through grand jury subpoenas. But he does not say that those subpoenas are limited to criminal investigations and are public, while Section 215 requests need have no connection whatsoever to crime and are carried out entirely in secret. He also stresses that records requests must be approved by a court upon a showing that the records are related to an investigation concerning a foreign national and, if the investigation concerns a US citizen or permanent-resident alien, that the investigation is not based solely on First Amendment–protected activities. But he fails to acknowledge that these limitations apply only to the target of the investigation and not to those whose records are sought. Once the government has a legitimate investigation under way, the act allows it to obtain library records on unlimited numbers of citizens, without making any showing that these citizens were involved in illegal activity.

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Ashcroft's most questionable claim is that the Patriot Act has led to crucial successes in the war on terrorism. First, his linkage of the act to indictments he has handed down is dubious. He typically points to an indictment, asserts that it depended on cooperation among local, state and federal intelligence and law-enforcement officials, and then vaguely claims that the act broke down the "wall" that previously blocked communication between law enforcement and intelligence agencies. But with the exception of a single provision allowing prosecutors to share grand jury information with intelligence officials, the Patriot Act did not eliminate any legal "wall." As insiders have observed, the "walls" between agencies were cultural and bureaucratic, not legal, and the Administration did not need the Patriot Act to bring them down.

Second, Ashcroft greatly exaggerates his "successes." He claims to have brought 255 criminal charges in terror investigations, but the vast majority of those charges were pretextual criminal charges (like credit card fraud or lying to an FBI agent) used to justify holding people who turned out to have no connection with terrorism. Similarly, he claims to have deported more than 515 people in the investigation but fails to mention Justice Department policy that authorized deportation only after the FBI cleared immigrants of involvement in terrorism. To call these successes is to treat bullets that miss the target completely as bull's-eyes.

Third, and most important, Ashcroft fails to account for losses in liberty and privacy. If we were to repeal the Fourth Amendment, every police department in the country would be able to point to arrests that were made possible as a result. But to judge whether we lived in a better world for it, we'd want to know how many innocent people had been searched and how much the loss of privacy had undermined our quality of life. Ashcroft tells us only one side of the story. But there are by now thousands, mostly Arabs and Muslims, who could tell us the other side.

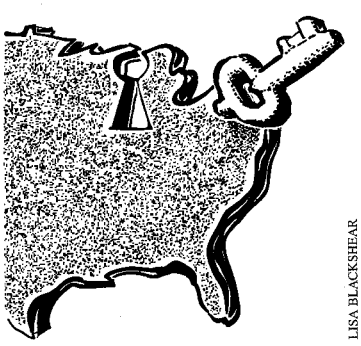
In the end, Ashcroft's self-promotion recalls Benjamin Constant's account of Jacobin excesses during the French Revolution: "They dreamt of nothing else but measures of public safety, great measures, masterstrokes of state; they thought themselves extraordinary geniuses because justice seemed to them a narrow preoccupation. With each political crime they committed, you could hear them proclaiming: 'once again we have saved the country!' Certainly we should have been adequately convinced by this, that a country saved every day in this manner must be a country that will soon be ruined." ■

THE PRESIDENT CLAIMS HE IS DOING EVERYTHING HE CAN TO PROTECT US. BUT HE'S NOT.

Homeland Insecurity

DAVID CORN

In early August, as George W. Bush was beginning a monthlong working vacation at his Texas ranch, he told reporters, "We learned a lesson on September the 11th, and that is, our nation is vulnerable to attack. And we're doing everything we can to protect the homeland." *Everything we can.* That was a bold statement. But it was not accurate. Indeed, it was one of the more galling misrepresentations of his presidency, for crucial areas of homeland security—ports, chemical plants, emergency response, biodefense—are not getting adequate attention or funding. Two years after the nation's vulnerability was exposed, at the price of 3,000 lives, everything is *not* being done. Why? Because, in part, of the Administration's strategic and ideological assumptions.



LISA BLACKSHEAR

Here are a few recent and troubling indicators:

§ In June a Council on Foreign Relations task force—headed by former Republican Senator Warren Rudman—issued a report noting that "the United States remains dangerously ill-prepared to handle a catastrophic attack on American soil." According to this study, most fire departments are short on radios and breathing apparatuses and only 10 percent are able to handle a building collapse. Police departments across the country lack the protective gear necessary to secure a site struck by a weapon of mass destruction. Most public health labs do not have the personnel or equipment to respond to a chemical or biological attack. The task force estimated the country will fall $98.4 billion short in funding needs for emergency responders over the next five years. And a study released by RAND in August essentially seconded the CFR task force report.

§ According to a June report by the Century Foundation's Homeland Security Project, "State and local governments have complained that they cannot improve their preparedness without more money. The federal government promised $3.5 billion in aid, but only $2.2 billion has been made available so far."

§ In June Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge announced about $300 million in funding for improving security at ports. The Coast Guard, though, has estimated that $1 billion is needed. Ports throughout the United States have asked for nearly that much to finance 1,380 security projects. "Any and all funding is helpful, but [the money provided] really doesn't even come close to what is needed," Maureen Ellis, a spokeswoman for the American Association of Port Authorities, told the *Baltimore Sun*. Stephen Flynn, a retired Coast Guard commander and a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, worked on a CFR terrorism study that

David Corn, The Nation*'s Washington editor, is author of the forthcoming book* The Lies of George W. Bush: Mastering the Politics of Deception *(Crown).*

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preceded the report on emergency responders. He complains that the government has spent only about $10 million on security for maritime containers. "We've invested so little to date," he warns.

§ A review conducted by the Partnership for Public Service, a nonpartisan good-government outfit, found that the government is drastically short on medical and scientific employees for its biodefense programs.

§ In late July the Transportation Security Administration asked Congress for permission to reduce its air marshal program by 20 percent, at a time when the Bush Administration was issuing warnings about hijackings. To counter the ensuing bad PR, Ridge declared there would be no reduction in the program. (He later announced its reassignment to another agency.) Since the TSA has received nearly $1 billion less than it had requested, it has been forced to implement other program cuts.

§ The Bush Administration and Congress have yet to take action to enhance security at chemical plants. More than 100 facilities nationwide handle chemicals that, if released, could threaten a million or so people, and there are 15,000 other chemical sites to worry about. Yet no security standards have been established for these sites. The White House is supporting Senate legislation that would require chemical firms to conduct their own security assessments and has opposed a more stringent bill by Democratic Senator Jon Corzine that would grant Homeland Security the power to order specific security measures. Almost a year ago, Ridge himself said that voluntary industry efforts would not be sufficient to protect the public. Yet that's the Administration's approach. In March the General Accounting Office declared that "the federal government has not comprehensively assessed the chemical industry's vulnerabilities to terrorist attacks." Six months later, no such assessment has been made.

The continuing gaps in domestic security are partly a result of the ideological and strategic biases of Bush and his lieutenants.

So Bush is wrong. Not all steps are being taken. His White House has even opposed certain security measures. For example, the Administration has blocked legislation being pushed by Representative Edward Markey, a Massachusetts Democrat, that would require automated or manual screening of cargo shipped on passenger planes. Currently, most of this cargo—unlike travelers' checked baggage—is not screened. The House approved Markey's amendment by a 278-to-146 vote. But the Senate—pressed by the aviation industry and the White House—has ignored the issue. On the larger front, in July, Senator Robert Byrd and other Senate Democrats proposed adding $1.75 billion to the Department of Homeland Security budget—including about $730 million for first-responders, $602 million for port and transportation security, $100 million for examining air cargo and $80 million for handling chemical weapons attacks. The package was defeated on a mostly party-line vote, 50 to 43.

The question is not whether the government under Bush is adopting all obvious precautions, but why it is *not*. Rudman says the answer is "very complicated" and that it is difficult to push "a government this size to move with alacrity." He notes that the government has yet to conduct a comprehensive examination of the nation's domestic vulnerabilities and needs. "With national defense," he explains, "if there's a crisis and a need for two more air wings, the Pentagon does a requirement study and presents a case. We haven't had a requirement study on homeland security. Until that's done, you tend to throw money at it helter-skelter." Shouldn't reviewing the risks and creating a plan be a fundamental post-9/11 responsibility of the Administration? "I'm not being critical of anyone," Rudman adds. Not explicitly, that is.

No doubt, bureaucratic sclerosis is partly to blame. The Department of Homeland Security has been so busy merging various entities into one superagency that it's a wonder it can find the time to put out color-coded terrorism alerts. And one good example of bureaucratic lack of imagination was provided (unintentionally) by Al Martinez-Fonts, a top Ridge aide, in an interview for PBS's *NOW With Bill Moyers* this past March. Asked why the government had not moved to regulate security at chemical plants, he replied that on September 11 "it was not chemical plants that were blown up."

But the continuing gaps in domestic security are also a result of the biases of Bush and his lieutenants. "We're responding dysfunctionally to the new threat environment," Flynn comments. As an example, he notes, "There is no means of saying, Will one dollar on missile defense be better spent on preparing the local public-health-system response to a bioattack? If there is a smallpox attack, it could be equivalent to a nuclear missile attack." What inhibits rational planning and management, he asserts, is that the Bush Administration has an ideological objection to a strong federal role in domestic security. Much of the crucial infrastructure—perhaps more than 90 percent of it—is in the hands of commercial interests. If the Administration were serious about making Americans more secure, it would have to intervene forcefully in the private sector, which would likely raise industry costs. "The Administration has made it very clear it is not interested in regulation," Flynn says. "So much of homeland security then ends up being just a talkfest." Flynn characterizes the White House attitude this way: "Homeland security costs too much money and involves too much government, so we have to go straight to the source"—that is, the terrorists. "It's a seductive argument," he adds. "We can deal with the problem over there and don't have to conduct assessments and make investments here.... But we'll never succeed at eliminating these problems at the source and go around the planet and identify every possible angry young man who has the means to do what happened on 9/11. It's a fool's game."

Ivo Daalder, a Brookings Institution scholar, agrees, noting that a conceptual obsession hinders the Bush Administration's domestic security actions: "These guys think that if you get rid of the tyrants, you solve the problem." The Bush crowd, he suggests, really does—to an extent—consider the true source of evildoing to be not Al Qaeda and other on-the-ground terrorists but regimes that supposedly back them, even if the evidence does not support this position. "We analysts and commentators have not understood the centrality of rogue states in their worldview," Daalder maintains. "The mindset is, We cannot defend every target, so it's better to go after those who would do us harm." And that means zeroing in on Saddam Hussein and other rogue leaders. Both

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Flynn and Daalder point to the basic numbers to make their case. The Pentagon is receiving close to $400 billion; Homeland Security is in the mid-twenties range. "It's pretty clear," Daalder says. "One is fifteen times more important than the other."

Is Bush, with his less-than-everything approach, assuming any political risk? "People cannot believe," Flynn remarks, "that no one in the federal government has inspected security plans for chemical plants or that the US Coast Guard has conducted only ten port-vulnerability studies in the past year." If there is another terrorist assault on the country, he adds, "there will be an accounting, and people will be shocked by how little has been done. The American people will be enraged." Maybe not, says Daalder. "The American people cannot fathom that Bush isn't doing everything. Another attack could either reinforce the notion that he's trying to protect the country or that he's incapable. I used to think this was a golden issue for Democrats: tax cuts for 1 percent of Americans or security for 100 percent. But the American people cannot comprehend that a US President is not doing all that is necessary and not spending all the money that needs to be spent."

Bush might get away with misrepresenting his Administration's efforts. But more important than whether he ends up paying for his hollow promises is the possibility that thousands of Americans, if not more, might bear the cost of his negligence and false assurances. ■

AN INSTITUTION REPRESENTING CITIZENS, NOT STATES, WOULD ADVANCE WORLD DEMOCRACY.

Toward a Global Parliament

RICHARD FALK AND ANDREW STRAUSS

Global sentiment overwhelmingly rejects the Bush doctrine and its antidemocratic assertion of an American right to dictate collective security unilaterally. Faced with the prospect of a looming war in Iraq, millions around the world took to the streets in protest, sadly with little discernible effect. Now, in the aftermath of the war, those who are serious about promoting a world order that is democratic, equitable and sustainable must consider why so much popular energy produced such meager results and how such energy can be more effectively harnessed in the future.

LISA BLACKSHEAR

First of all, it is important for peace forces to advance beyond protest and rejectionism. The global peace-and-justice movement urgently requires its own alternative vision. But beyond this, we believe that this is one of those times when concrete steps for global reform should be proposed and acted upon. A positive vision of world order and the future of the United Nations should be as bold in moving toward global democracy as the Bush Administration's vision is in advancing its plans for global dominance.

Specifically, we suggest introducing into the global arena an institution that enables citizens to participate directly in the world political process regardless of their geographic location: namely, a citizen-elected Global Parliamentary Assembly (GPA). The struggle against American unilateralism will gain strength to the extent that the peoples of the world find ways to have their voices heard.

At present, there is no consistently effective way to counter the ability of US leaders (or leaders of any other states, for that matter) to mobilize the citizens and resources of their states for purposes at odds with the rules of international law. The world order remains a global system of states rather than laws when it comes to peace and security. Only when citizens are given an institutionalized site of struggle in the international system and citizen politics is allowed to operate beyond the confines of sovereign states is it likely that new sources of authority will gradually emerge.

A GPA would strengthen the international system by creating a new democratic core to that system. Vertically, the global parliament would derive legitimacy and power from its direct, unmediated link to the world's citizenry. And horizontally this new democratic body would be uniquely qualified to oversee and link the currently disjointed system of weak and disparate international organizations. It is important to realize that the UN as currently constituted is a club of states as represented by governments. How different from the Security Council debate on the prospective war against Iraq would have been a discussion representing the strongly held views of citizens.

What we are suggesting is neither a pipe dream nor a grandiose scheme for world government. Its prototype already exists regionally in the form of the European Parliament. Established in 1957, the European Parliament is, along with the Council of the European Union and the European Commission, one of the three lawmaking bodies of the European Union. In the early days, delegates to the Parliament were appointed by national parliaments, but in 1979 citizens began directly electing representatives. Though it started life as a largely advisory body, its character as the direct representative of the European citizenry has created an inexorable momentum toward empowerment. As a result of the Maastricht, Amsterdam and Nice treaties over the past decade, the Parliament now has veto power over approximately 80 percent of European Union legislation. Additional powers are envisioned in the constitution for the European Union that is currently under consideration.

Like the European Parliament, a global parliament could start

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modestly and develop incrementally. It could be established initially in various ways, including as an initiative by a vanguard of democratic governments willing to act as "world order pioneers." As few as twenty to thirty geographically, culturally and economically diverse countries would be enough to credibly launch this experiment in global democracy. So as to defuse resistance from apostles of the status quo, following the example of the European Parliament, its powers could be advisory during its early years.

Once in place, a global parliament would, it is hoped, over time increase in influence and reputation. The election process would by itself insure a distinctive institutional identity. Citizen groups would be encouraged to petition the global parliament to pass resolutions supportive of their positions. Those opposed to the policy preferences of these citizen groups, whether industrial lobbies, labor unions, states or other citizen groups, would likely be unwilling to concede to their opponents the legitimacy of the only popularly elected global body. Instead, they would likely come to participate as well. It is even possible that nationalistic critics and policy-makers hostile to global democracy would be inclined to participate and put forth their own views. As groups found in the parliament a transnational civic space in which to work out their differences, the center of political gravity could subtly shift in the parliament's favor. Allowed for the first time to participate in the international lawmaking process directly, the organized citizenry would tend to become institutionally committed to the GPA and invested in its activities.

The GPA would offer disaffected citizens a constructive alternative to terrorism and other forms of political violence.

As soon as the parliament begins functioning, citizen groups from countries around the world could exert pressure on their governments to join in the venture. Once a critical mass of membership was reached, even authoritarian governments might find it politically awkward to deny their citizens the right to be represented. At some point in its evolution, the parliament's formal legal powers, as well as its relationship with the UN, would have to be worked out and augmented by a constitutional process. Perhaps it could, alongside the General Assembly, become part of a bicameral global legislative system that would supplement the Security Council as the organ of the UN entrusted with primary responsibility in the area of peace and security. Whatever its precise legal evolution, the process of discovering and legalizing the role of the GPA would itself encourage a worldwide debate on the shape and substance of global governance.

This evolutionary process would take many years, possibly several decades. During this period, the parliament could still exert a benign moral influence that would complement the work of existing civil-society monitors and activists. By holding regional hearings, issuing reports, responding to citizen petitions and passing resolutions, the GPA could gradually introduce a greater measure of popular accountability into existing global institutions and help inform world public opinion about threats to human well-being neglected by states.

The mere establishment of a global parliament would be a welcome step, giving hope in a dark time. Taking such a step would signal the emergence of a democratic and peace-oriented alternative to achieving national security through domination and recurrent warfare. In a global parliament, delegates would not represent states, as they do at the United Nations, but rather the citizenry directly. As occurs in other multinational parliaments—such as in India, Belgium and the European Parliament itself—instead of voting along strictly national and ethnic lines, many delegates would come to vote along lines of interest and ideology. Thus, shifting transnational coalitions seeking the peaceful resolution of international disputes might be able to discourage political leaders and their publics from a reliance on armed conflict, and over time this might slowly lead to the withering away of war as a social institution. At the very least, the global climate would become more receptive to serious disarmament initiatives.

Likewise, the GPA would offer disaffected citizens a constructive alternative to terrorism and other forms of political violence. Those alienated by perceived injustices or by global silence about their grievances would no longer have to choose between surrender and the adoption of desperate tactics. Instead, they would have a legitimate international forum in which they could at least be heard and perhaps find enough support to achieve peaceful redress. Citizens would be able to stand for office, champion candidates and form coalitions to lobby the parliament, a process that would bring those with diverse or opposing views into a give-and-take setting that would improve the chances for compromise and reconciliation. Those whose views did not prevail would likely be more inclined to accept defeat out of a belief in the fairness of the process, and with an understanding that they could continue to press their cause on future occasions.

Of course, the brand of religious extremism associated with September 11 is decidedly antidemocratic in outlook. It is reasonable to question the ability of a parliament to successfully absorb supporters of Al Qaeda and groups with comparable agendas of violence. A salient feature of the liberal parliamentary process at its best, however, has been a capacity to assimilate even those who do not share a pre-existing commitment to democracy. Because a parliamentary process allows for participation and has the ability to confer popular legitimacy on a policy position, experience suggests that even those with extreme agendas will often be drawn into the process—though they may voice dissatisfaction with it and be frequently discouraged by the results. Most aggrieved people in the world, however, are neither ideologically antidemocratic nor naturally prone to extremism and, therefore, given democratic options are much less likely to resort to violence. It is notable that Israeli Arabs continue to value their participation in the Knesset and that Sinn Fein has felt the same with regard to the Northern Ireland Assembly. Of course, the Osama bin Ladens of the planet will never accept the legitimacy of a global parliamentary process. But their ability to attract a significant following might well be substantially diminished by the presence of such an institution, especially if the legitimate grievances of peoples around the world were being consistently addressed with an eye toward the realization of global justice and the promotion of the rule of law. ■

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Letter From Ground Zero

(Continued From Page 8)

its own, is incapable of providing Iraq with a government that serves its own people. The United States therefore must, to begin with, surrender control of the operation to an international force. It will not suffice to provide "UN cover" for an American operation, as the Administration now seems to propose. The United States should announce a staged withdrawal of its forces in favor of and in conjunction with whatever international forces can be cobbled together. It should also (but surely will not) provide that force with about a hundred billion or so dollars to do its work—a low estimate of what is needed to rebuild Iraq.

Biden says we must win the war. This is precisely wrong. The United States must learn to lose this war—a harder task, in many ways, than winning, for it requires admitting mistakes and relinquishing attractive fantasies. This is the true moral mission of our time (well, of the next few years, anyway). The cost of leaving will certainly be high, just not anywhere near as high as trying to "stay the course," which can only magnify and postpone the disaster.

And yet—regrettable to say—even if this difficult step is taken, no one should imagine that democracy will be achieved by this means. The great likelihood is something else—something worse: perhaps a recrudescence of dictatorship or civil war, or both. An interim period—probably very brief—of international trusteeship is the best solution, yet it is unlikely to be a good solution. It is merely better than any other recourse. The good options have probably passed us by. They may never have existed. If the people of Iraq are given back their country, there isn't the slightest guarantee that they will use the privilege to create a liberal democracy. The creation of democracy is an organic process that must proceed from the will of the local people. Sometimes that will is present, more often it is not. Vietnam provides an example. Vietnam today enjoys the self-determination it battled to achieve for so long; but it has not become a democracy.

On the other hand, just because Iraq's future remains to be decided by its talented people, it would also be wrong to categorically rule out the possibility that they will escape tyranny and create democratic government for themselves. The United States and other countries might even find ways of offering modest assistance in the project. It's just that it is beyond the power of the United States to create democracy for them.

The matter is not in our hands. It never was.

Jonathan Schell, the Harold Willens Peace Fellow of the Nation Institute, is the author of the recently published The Unconquerable World: Power, Nonviolence, and the Will of the People *(Metropolitan).*

LETTERS CONTINUED

(Continued From Page 2)

itary and strategic environment," as Seale asserts. It seems much more probable that it is being fought for the profit margins of Halliburton and Bechtel, which received government contracts to rebuild Iraq without having to bid for them. Despite the Administration's "pro-Israeli" rhetoric, I have no doubt that our fearless leaders will change their tune as soon as their alleged "support" for Israel ceases to be expedient.

While pretending to review a book about the Kennedy Administration's Mideast policy, Seale alerts his naïvely unsuspecting audience that "most prominent neocons are right-wing Jews." I would suggest to Seale that right-wing Jewish neocons are simply unfeeling sons-of-bitches like the rest of the right-wing neocons, and not because they're Jewish. I thought the notion of an international Jewish conspiracy died when Hitler shot himself in the head, but apparently it lives on in Seale's heart and in your pages. JACK L. SCHWARTZWALD

SEALE REPLIES

Paris

■ I imagine Warren Bass would not dispute that his exploration of the origins of the US-Israeli alliance is of interest largely because of the influence the present Israeli government and its right-wing US friends have acquired over America's Middle East policy. Without this critical contemporary influence a study of origins would attract little attention, and Bass might have chosen a different subject on which to exercise his undoubted historical talents. It is precisely because the alliance has, in his telling words, grown into "one of the most expensive and extensive relationships of the post-war era, with a price tag in the billions of dollars and diplomatic consequences to match" that his book makes important reading.

Among the alliance's "diplomatic consequences," I argue in my review, is America's war on Iraq, waged on false premises. Pressure from the Sharon government and from pro-Likud officials in the Pentagon and other agencies of the US government, as well as persistent warmongering by lobbyists, right-wing journalists and think tanks, helped to shove America into war. The same people who were its advocates now hold a posture of "no retreat," perhaps for fear of what an admission of failure might do to their careers and to the causes they espouse! It is neither tendentious nor polemical to say so, and it is pitiful that Bass's courage fails him when he moves from safe history to the more confrontational present day.

I salute Jack Schwartzwald's distaste for the "violent and mistaken military policy of the Bush Administration," but it is curious that he refuses to recognize the role of Israel and its hard-right pro-Zionist American friends in shaping this policy. To draw attention to this role is not to be anti-Semitic, as Schwartzwald charges, but the very reverse. It is out of concern for peace between Arab and Jew in the Middle East (a cause to which I have dedicated my life) that I argue that Israel should seek to be a good neighbor to the Arabs, rather than to strive to dominate them by military force. Sharon's apparent belief that a Greater Israel can be built on the "comprehensive defeat" of Israel's enemies has bred suicide bombers and could tomorrow, out of Palestinian desperation and Muslim anger, breed something a good deal worse. His brutal policies have themselves created a new and frightening anti-Semitism, which should alarm us all.

Fortunately, one hears less today of the neocons' pre-war fantasy that, once Arabs and Muslims were freed from their local tyrannies, they would give up Arab nationalism and Islamic militancy and become pro-America and pro-Israel. The reverse has happened. A tidal wave of anti-American and anti-Israeli hate now engulfs the whole region, putting citizens of both countries gravely at risk.

The Arabs totally reject a new colonial experience. They will never accept the military conquests or the long-term domination of either the United States or Israel. They want America out of Iraq and Israel out of the occupied territories. It must be recalled that, at the Arab Summit of March 2002, all the Arab states without exception solemnly pledged that they would establish normal peaceful relations with Israel once it withdrew to its 1967 borders. A blind and arrogant Sharon dismissed the offer out of hand, but it remains the only way Israel can ever achieve permanent security and the United States recover its authority and immunity from attack. PATRICK SEALE

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

An Empire of Their Own

How born-again Christians turned biblical prophecy into big-time profit.

MELANI McALISTER

ARMAGEDDON: The Cosmic Battle of the Ages (Left Behind, 11).
By Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins.
Tyndale House. 395 pp. $24.99.

"I have never had such a bad feeling about a war ever before," wrote Sha Twa Nee on the Prophecy Club message board in April. This war, she said, "has given me such a 'heaviness' in my heart, a knowing that it is only the beginning of more to come.... I do believe we are living in the end times and that this war with Iraq is the precursor war to Armageddon...never have there been so many signs as now in history."

As conflict in the Middle East raged this spring, many evangelicals were afire with fears and hopes that they were witnessing the quickening of God's plan for the "end of times." The discussion, which traversed the Internet, Christian radio talk shows and church sermons, was intensified by the fortuitously timed publication of *Armageddon*, the latest novel in the *Left Behind* series. Conceived by evangelist Tim LaHaye and written by collaborator Jerry Jenkins, *Left Behind* is a fictionalization of a particularly incendiary school of biblical prophecy. The eleven books published so far describe the adventures of a group of evangelical Christians who face the rise of the Antichrist, a series of terrible plagues and judgments from God called the Tribulation, the battle of Armageddon and, ultimately, the Second Coming of Jesus. Like the previous four books in the series, *Armageddon* debuted at number one on the *New York Times* and other bestseller lists. With sales of well over 40 million (not counting its graphic novels and children's books), *Left Behind* is a publishing juggernaut.

The series is also a cultural phenomenon that goes well beyond books. Since the eponymously titled first novel in the series was published in 1995, there have been two films, several CDs, an interactive game, mugs and T-shirts, and an impressive web presence, with many active discussion groups (including "The Prophecy Club"), fan fiction, screen-savers, etc. The Apocalypse is at the heart of a growing evangelical popular culture industry, which is aimed at the approximately one-third of Americans who claim to be evangelicals or "born again." This industry includes a rapidly expanding book market, which has major publishing houses, notably Warner Books and Bertelsmann, rushing to sign up evangelical authors for their new "Christian" imprints. Contemporary Christian music is the fastest-growing segment of the music industry. And conservative Christian films, videos, radio, national conferences and community events have evolved into mass-marketed sites for talking about evangelical concerns, from family life to weight loss to global missionary work. Instead of condemning popular culture, as they did in the past, many evangelicals are now feverishly adopting its forms to create a parallel world of entertainment, a consumer's paradise of their own. Just ten years ago, it was still a fledgling subculture; today, it is anything but.

By feverishly adopting the forms of pop culture, evangelicals have created a parallel world of faith-based entertainment.

Having carved out this distinct universe, born-again Christians are now able to find almost total product substitution for mainstream media: There are evangelical versions of everything from rock music and films to romance novels and true-life tales. Much of this sprawling cultural universe is not oriented around discussions of biblical prophecy—many committed evangelicals aren't particularly interested in the subject—but an impressive subset takes the "end times" as its subject. Novels and films are churning out an intricate set of narratives that blend fundamentalist orthodoxy

Melani McAlister, an associate professor of American studies at George Washington University, is the author of Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and US Interests in the Middle East, 1945–2000 *(California).*

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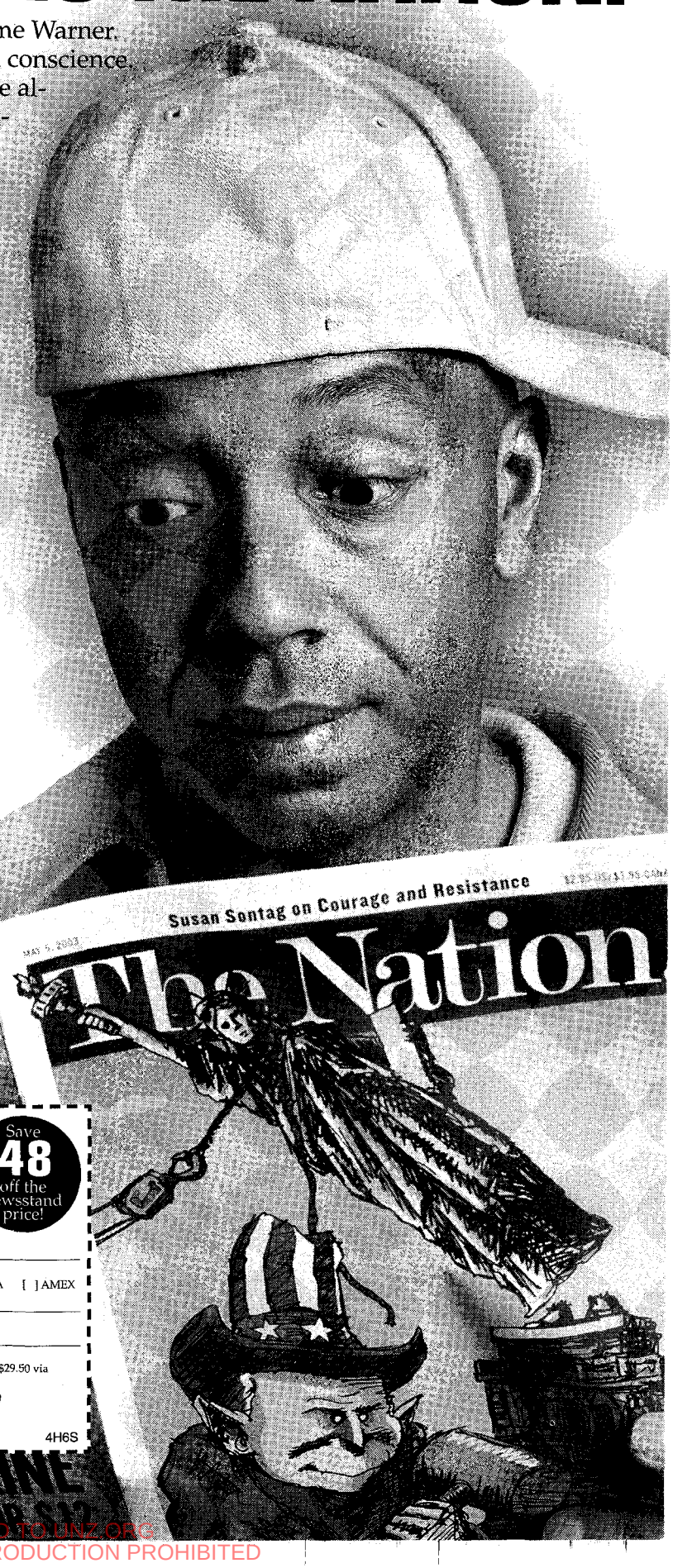

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Russell Simmons is a longstanding Nation reader.

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and conservative politics in a nightmarish vision of the world's imminent demise. Given that a recent *Time*/CNN poll showed that 59 percent of Americans believe that the events in Revelation are going to come true, the extraordinary popularity of the apocalyptic *Left Behind* series is something to be taken seriously indeed.

The series, which will include fourteen novels in all, is one long story. The opening book tells of a group of Americans, either nominal Christians or secularists, who, because they lack sufficient faith, are "left behind" when God takes all true believers into heaven in an event known as the Rapture. These unbelievers soon realize their mistake, and convert to evangelical Christianity. In preparation for the horrific yet enthralling events of the "end times," they form themselves into an underground "Tribulation Force." Rayford Steele, a strong-willed pilot in his 40s, is the head of the group. He is joined by his daughter Chloe and her husband, Buck Williams, a tough-minded crack journalist. The team is soon joined by Tsion Ben-Judah, an Israeli rabbi who has come to understand that Jesus was in fact the Jewish Messiah. As the plagues begin, bringing locust-looking demons and terrible natural disasters, from the drying up of seas to the darkening of the sun, Ben-Judah becomes an end-times prophet, teaching millions of new converts on his Internet site about the biblical meaning of the unfolding events.

Meanwhile, the rising Antichrist is Nicolae Carpathia, a handsome, urbane and lethally devious Romanian national who started his ascent to power as Secretary General of the United Nations (a long-standing object of fundamentalist wrath). Before long, Carpathia establishes himself as a global dictator and foists onto a gullible population a totalitarian, one-world government, a single global currency and a syncretic universal religion that combines Catholic-style pomp with New Age rhetoric. Soon the Antichrist builds himself a massive capital city from which to rule the world—in New Babylon, Iraq. (Obviously, this plot element connected impressively with the recent war, though it was already in place in *Left Behind* novels from the late 1990s.)

As the series progresses, and the final confrontation between good and evil approaches, the Antichrist intensifies his persecution of all who resist his power, particularly Jews and Christians. Opposing him, the Tribulation Force expands rapidly, gathering other committed converts all over the globe. The revolving cast of characters features not only whites, blacks and Native Americans but also Chinese, Greeks, Arabs and countless numbers of Israeli Jews. They are a tough, multinational cohort of guerrilla warriors, including military men, housewives, computer hackers and pilots—many, many pilots. They fly back and forth between their secret hideouts in the United States and the sites of the real action, in Israel and Iraq. They manage to keep an eye on the goings on at New Babylon via deep-cover operatives and untraceable bugging devices. In short, they are highly competent and modern people, who whip around the world at a moment's notice in fighter jets or private planes, e-mail one another over highly encrypted computers and rescue those in danger.

In the Left Behind *series, Israel is the only nation God favors. America doesn't come close; after all, it's not mentioned in the Bible.*

In *Armageddon*, the members of the Tribulation Force join the "Remnant" of Israel, a core group of Jewish converts who have taken sanctuary at Petra, in Jordan, where they are fed manna from heaven each day. This group of Jews is held in special favor by God, thanks to their conversion. When Jesus returns (in the next novel), it is to fight on behalf of Israel against the massed power of the Antichrist. And, as the characters in *Left Behind* reassure one another repeatedly, biblical prophecy has already made the outcome clear: "We know how it ends. We win."

If this plot summary seems bizarre, the remarkable thing is that the scenario laid out in the novels is in no way outlandish or even very creative, if measured against the rich tapestry of evangelical fiction and nonfiction literature and film over the past twenty-five years. Since 1970, when Hal Lindsey published the hipster-styled book of prophecy interpretation *The Late Great Planet Earth*, which went on to become the bestselling nonfiction book of the decade, evangelical prophecy scholars have published one popularizing book after another, many of which were Christian bookstore bestsellers. In the mid-1970s, a low-budget film about a group of teenagers facing the Rapture traveled widely on the church-basement circuit. Its theme song, "I Wish We'd All Been Ready," became a staple of youth groups and Christian concerts for a decade. By the 1980s, several authors, including Pat Robertson, started turning the pious tracts into rollicking adventure; Frank Peretti's *This Present Darkness* (1986) sold several million copies; and the 1999 film *Omega Code* was the year's most successful independent release. In the late 1990s prophecy also moved to the Internet, with sites like raptureready.com and prophecynewswatch.com.

Left Behind readers are likely to have been immersed in that cultural milieu. The publisher, Tyndale House, says that 85 percent of its readers describe themselves as "born again," and almost 65 percent first heard about the series through friends or relatives. The average reader is a white married woman from the South, between 25 and 54 years old, who attends church weekly. Latinos make up 9 percent of the readers; African-Americans are 7 percent. These latter numbers are striking. More than 15 percent of *Left Behind* readers are people of color—that's certainly a lot higher than the percentage of blacks or Latinos who watch *Friends*—and it indicates more racial diversity than talk about "white evangelicals" generally suggests. Then again, given that two-thirds of the African-American population identifies as evangelical or born-again Christian, the number of African-American readers is actually rather low.

Different authors and preachers have offered their own specific visions of the apocalypse prophecy scenario: Ardent prophecy watchers may be biblical literalists, but their interpretations are developed by piecing together passages that are scattered across the "prophetic" books of the Bible, in acts of constructive meaning-making that would make any English professor proud. Still, the basic outlines are not really up for grabs, and by now certain stock images—the clothes left on an empty airline seat when a believer is Raptured, or the smooth-talking Antichrist holding forth at UN headquarters—have become ritualistic markers of a highly politicized religious culture.

The links between global politics and the "prophetic calendar" are matters of doctrine among the large swath of evangelicals who are also ardent prophecy watchers. For these true believers, the Middle East, particularly Israel and Iraq, is deeply important, both religiously and politically, as the theater of God's actions in the final days. LaHaye has often argued that the founding of Israel—the return of the Jews to their land—is the "supersign"

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that the Second Coming is approaching. In *Left Behind*, as in virtually every other prophecy adventure, Israel is the only nation God favors. Despite the well-documented nationalism of many Christian conservatives, most interpreters argue that the United States as a nation hardly figures at all in the end times. After all, as several Internet commentators have pointed out, America is not mentioned in the Bible. Jerry Falwell suggested something similar back in 1985, when he announced that "if we fail to protect Israel, we will cease to be important to God."

If he's right, then the United States must matter to God a great deal these days. The remarkable influence of the Christian right and more specifically Christian Zionism on the current Bush Administration's Middle East policy has been hard to miss. Right-wing figures in Congress like Oklahoma Republican Jim Inhofe and House majority leader Tom DeLay have close working relationships with evangelicals like LaHaye, Falwell and Ralph Reed. These evangelists and politicians are in turn deeply connected to the Israeli right, including Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and his finance minister, Benjamin Netanyahu. The relationship has deepened in recent years—it seems as if some Jewish pro-Israeli organization is always giving Pat Robertson an award, and among grassroots Christian conservatives, there are multiple campaigns to raise money to settle immigrant Jews in the West Bank and Gaza—but the connections pay off particularly well in times of crisis. When the Israelis pushed into Jenin last year, for example, killing dozens of Palestinians and leaving thousands homeless, Falwell organized a massive e-mail campaign to call for the United States to "stand firm" behind Israel, while DeLay spearheaded Congressional opposition to any weakening of the Bush Administration's pro-Sharon stance. At about that time, DeLay discussed his recent trip to the Middle East before the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. "I didn't see any occupied territory," he told the appreciative audience. "What I saw was Israel." More recently, DeLay declared himself "an Israeli of the heart" in a rabid speech before the Knesset.

Not surprisingly, some Israelis and American Jews have expressed profound unease with this kind of support. Gershom Gorenberg, author of *The End of Days: Fundamentalism and the Struggle for the Temple Mount*, has called this evangelical embrace a "strangely exploitative relationship," in which evangelicals love Israel primarily because they believe its existence proves that biblical prophecies are true. The history of conservative Christian anti-Semitism is no small issue here, and LaHaye himself is no small contributor to that history. LaHaye was active in the Moral Majority in the 1980s and was later forced to resign as co-chairman of Jack Kemp's 1988 presidential campaign for having called Catholicism a "false religion" and for blaming Jewish suffering on the Jewish rejection of Jesus. More recently, in an interview with Jeffrey Goldberg in *Slate* magazine, LaHaye announced that "some of the greatest evil in the history of the world was concocted in the Jewish mind." "The Jewish brain," he added kindly, also "has the capacity for great good." LaHaye's crude views are hardly the norm among evangelicals, but the suspicion remains that the pro-Israeli positions emerging from the Christian right are at best instrumental and at worst a dangerous enthusiasm for the impending destruction and/or mass conversion of Jews. The criticisms have led a few evangelical leaders, including Pat Robertson, to deny that biblical prophecy plays a primary role in their pro-Israel positions.

This general caveat undoubtedly holds some truth; many evangelical Christians, even those who don't hold a particular interest in prophecy, are deeply committed to a pro-Israel stance. But if we pay attention to the lively world of evangelical popular culture, it becomes clear that prophecy narratives mobilize a particular kind of energy and enthusiasm. A generic sense of support for God's Chosen People becomes something far more exciting and more emotionally powerful when placed in the context of what many evangelicals believe to be the most religiously significant events of all time. On the multiple web message boards on leftbehind.com, for example, enthusiastic posts situate Israel's history and current politics within an ongoing series of discussions about "Are We Living in the End Times," or "How Soon Will It Be?" Recently, one contributor wrote in to say that she is anxious and feels the world is spiraling out of control. The reply from another poster: "Relax! Enjoy seeing the Bible come to life! It's proof that it IS REAL!"

Quite a few moderate and liberal evangelicals have criticized the theological bent that turns every current event into an occasion to prove that the end is near. Randall Balmer, an evangelical who has written a series of influential studies of the movement, says that the focus on prophecy emerges out of a "theology of despair" based on a "slavishly literalistic" reading

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of Revelation. He describes *Left Behind* as "camp fiction," and calls it both triumphalist and self-righteous. Other commentators aren't nearly so generous: *Christian Century* magazine described *Left Behind* as simple-minded "beam me up theology."

But that "beam me up" theology is central to the books' appeal. At the level of fundamentalist doctrine, the *Left Behind* series is unreconstructed and proud of it: There is only Jesus Christ, and Christianity is the only truth. Winning converts is the primary moral duty of the characters (and, one presumes, of the novels themselves). The narrative inveighs repeatedly against abortion, sexual "immorality" and false religion. At the same time, the fast-paced chase scenes, direct visitations by angels and humorous banter among the tough-minded fly-boys lend excitement to the long didactic messages in which Tsion Ben-Judah details the meaning of particular biblical verses, or the endless repetition of scenes in which yet another character recounts how he or she found Jesus. What makes these novels work is that they seamlessly integrate an apocalyptic religious view with a strongly conservative political vision, and locate both in a universe of supernatural action adventure in which good and evil are fully and finally revealed.

The war between good and evil is the moral heart of the series, and the utter lack of ambiguity in the situations it evokes is the utopian lamp in the dark world of the end times. Religiously, the purity of believers is contrasted with the evil religion propounded by the Antichrist and his henchmen. Those on the wrong side of God suffer the kind of tortures that right-wing radio commentators like Rush Limbaugh have sometimes seemed to wish on "Feminazis": They are bitten by demon-locusts and suffer terribly for five months; they are struck down by flashes of fire and sulfur, trampled by ghostly, death-dealing horsemen who ride the skies and attack only nonbelievers. Believers, on the other hand, are immune from much of this suffering, though they do face death and danger, and occasionally become martyrs for their cause.

A more earthly right-wing political critique is fully integrated into this narrative, and all the traditional far-right bugbears make an appearance. The one-world government of the Antichrist, for example, has its origins in a shadowy conspiracy between a group of Trilateral Commission–like financiers and the fearful members of the UN, who are so desperate for "peace" that they allow themselves to be taken over by a dictator. And that totalitarian rule embodies every conceivable form of liberal tyranny. It is simultaneously economic (the Antichrist introduces a single currency), cultural (he has a monopoly on world media) and political (his police state employs "Morale Monitors" who patrol the streets, hunting down and executing any dissidents). Oh, and the Antichrist also tries to make his lover have an abortion. So it is that when one of the Antichrist's henchmen describes the Tribulation Force members as "right-wing, fanatic, fundamentalist faction," we as readers are invited to consider the source and take it as a compliment. We know whose side God is on, and who will be destroyed at the end.

Of course, the *Left Behind* series is fiction, and fiction is not a hypodermic needle, injecting beliefs into unwary victims. The fact that we watch a particular TV show or read a particular set of novels doesn't mean we buy their entire world-view. I am a big fan of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, but I'm not at all inclined to believe that there is a hell mouth in California. (I do, however, occasionally allow myself to imagine that Martin Sheen is President.) We cannot assume, then, that every *Left Behind* reader is, or becomes, a prophecy-talking, Bible-believing, UN-bashing conservative Christian. Nor can we assume that all evangelicals, even politically conservative ones, share the ideology of the prophecy set. Indeed, there is some evidence that fans of the series read the books as if they were Stephen King novels, and the series has received reviews on both science fiction and horror websites. Even on the official leftbehind.com chat-rooms, many younger readers announce that their other favorite books are the *Star Trek* and *Star Wars* series, or novels by Marion Zimmer Bradley and even Anne Rice.

But *Left Behind* is more than a collection of novels. It exists within an evangelical milieu both broad and deep. That universe is both highly interactive and intimately familiar to most of its readers, filled with stock apocalyptic imagery, detailed biblical exegesis and action-adventure realism that marries contemporary evangelical fascinations, conservative political values and popular-culture pleasures. This kind of thick context makes it much more likely that the *Left Behind* novels will be received as prophecy, not dismissed as fluff, by the evangelicals who form their core audience.

Left Behind also highlights something important about the way mass culture works. Rather than creating a homog-

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enized McWorld, as so many critics have claimed, popular culture can and does reinforce ideological and cultural divisions, fostering sharp distinctions between communities. The evangelical population in the United States is becoming more numerous, more politicized—particularly around foreign policy—and more powerful than ever before. This transformation is as much cultural as political, or rather, it is inextricably both at once. Those of us who care deeply about the future of politics, domestic and international, cannot afford to ignore the fact that evangelicals are no longer merely a subculture. They are fast becoming a—perhaps the—dominant force in American life. As the Middle East smolders, many people have debated the role of George W. Bush's Christian beliefs in his foreign policy, and we are daily confronted with the lobbying muscle of the Christian right. But if we want to understand conservative Christians as a political force, we must pay attention to the galvanizing power of culture. The astonishing success of the *Left Behind* series suggests that the conservative obsession with biblical prophecy is increasingly shaping our secular reality. I wish we'd all been ready. ■

Our Families, Ourselves

EYAL PRESS

BEARING RIGHT: How Conservatives Won the Abortion War.
By William Saletan. University of California Press. 327 pp. $29.95.

To many liberals and feminists, George W. Bush's mishandling of the war on terrorism and reckless economic agenda are not the only reasons to oppose him. There is also a more intimate fear. "President Bush has said he will model nominees after Justices Scalia and Thomas—the Court's most vocal opponents of the *Roe* decision," warns a fundraising letter circulated recently by NARAL Pro-Choice America.

It's an understandable concern. But what if the principle animating it—that every woman should be assured the basic right to control her body—has already been so severely compromised as to render *Roe* meaningless for millions of Americans? And what if part of the responsibility for this lies with the very groups entrusted to serve as uncompromising advocates of reproductive rights?

In his new book, *Bearing Right*, William Saletan argues that the struggle for abortion rights has already been settled—only the victor is not who you might think it is. Thirty years after the Supreme Court issued its historic ruling in *Roe*, abortion remains legal in all fifty states. Yet according to Saletan, a political correspondent for *Slate*, it is not liberals but conservatives who have won the abortion war.

The reason is that the struggle for reproductive freedom has been repackaged in terms that would be unrecognizable to the feminists who fought to have abortion legalized during the 1960s. Back then, the struggle was about empowering women to control their bodies and lead independent lives. Today, Saletan argues, it is about limiting government power and affirming the authority not of women but of families. The terms of debate are distinctly conservative, he notes, and the irony is that the pro-choice movement crafted the script itself.

To explain how this came about, Saletan takes us into the world of political consultants and strategists, a world whose intricacies can often cause a reader's eyes to glaze over. Fortunately, Saletan is a lucid writer who understands the value of brevity. The story begins in Little Rock, Arkansas, where, in 1957, President Eisenhower famously dispatched 1,200 federal troops to protect nine black children from an angry mob intent on preventing them from attending the all-white Central High School. To liberals, the freedom in that battle clearly belonged to the nine black students exercising their civil rights. But in Arkansas and much of the South, Saletan reminds us, it belonged just as unmistakably to white parents seeking to educate their children without government interference.

Fast-forward three decades to 1986, and this same principle would resonate in a very different context. That year, pro-choice activists gathered in Little Rock to strategize over how to defeat a pro-life ballot measure that proposed banning all public funding for abortion. Arkansas had a Democratic governor at the time, a smooth-talking moderate from Hope named William Jefferson Clinton. But though Clinton reportedly hoped the measure would fail, the future President in him sensed its popularity and refused to oppose it.

How, then, to defeat the measure? Some feminists advocated launching a campaign focusing on the women who would suffer most from a funding ban, "the poorest of the poor." The trouble is that surveys showed a majority of Americans opposed using tax dollars to fund abortions for poor women, a view rooted as much in antigovernment and antitax sentiment as in pro-life beliefs (tellingly, opposition spiked when the phrase "women on welfare" was tossed in). Waging such a struggle might rally the faithful—"all fourteen feminists," one activist from Little Rock joked—but it was also guaranteed to fail.

Yet perhaps there was an alternative. A little-known political strategist named Harrison Hickman had one in mind. Born and raised in North Carolina, Hickman was a Democrat with an intuitive grasp of the Bible Belt's mores. Unlike many of the feminists whose cause he'd been enlisted to advance, he understood that while a campaign on behalf of reproductive freedom for poor women would get nowhere, one framed around suspicion of government and respect for parental sovereignty might. And so, under Hickman's guidance, pro-choicers altered the message. A NOW radio ad soon warned voters that if taxpayers refused to subsidize abortions, they could end up footing the bill for even more expensive pregnancies and children. Hickman and another consultant aired a commercial that depicted a chaste 14-year-old virgin who was raped on her way home from school. The victim was shown sobbing in her mother's arms; a gray-haired physician then explained to the family that he couldn't help terminate the resulting pregnancy. "Imagine," a narrator explained, "the government says *they'll* make the decision. Never mind the circumstances. You, your doctor, your preacher, your daughter have no say in this personal, private tragedy."

The ad said nothing about reproductive rights or poor women, which was no accident. "Our goal must be to redefine the issue away from a question of rights, to one of government intrusion, privacy," Hickman counseled. The ballot measure in Arkansas was defeated, and shortly afterward Kate Michelman, the head of NARAL, hired Hickman as a consultant. By 1987, the two

Eyal Press writes frequently for The Nation *and is working on a book about the abortion wars in Buffalo, New York.*

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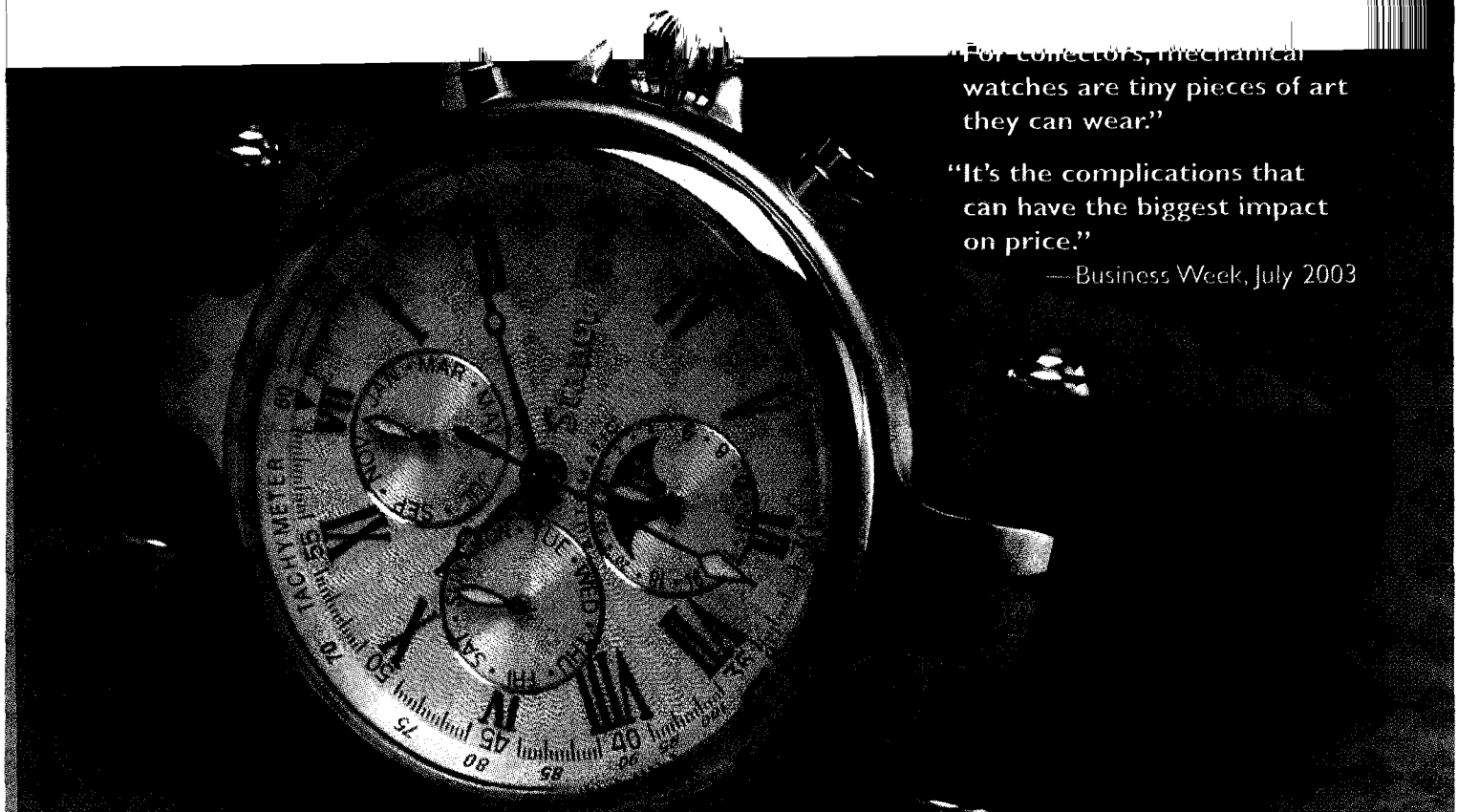

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had sifted through the polling data and settled on a potent new slogan aimed at ordinary Americans. In place of the old question, "Are you for or against abortion?" came a new one, "Who Decides—You or Them?"—you being the pregnant woman, them being politicians poking their noses into the family realm.

It was feminism dressed up in libertarian drag, and its effect was magical. In Alabama, only 42 percent of voters endorsed a woman's right to an abortion, but 71 percent agreed that the matter was "best left up to a woman and her doctor without government interference." Eighty percent of Americans nationwide concurred when the issue was framed this way.

Only there was a catch. For as Saletan notes, the definition of "you" in the question, "who decides?" could vary, referring not only to the pregnant woman but, as conservatives soon began arguing, to parents, boyfriends and other outside parties. Despite Hickman's clever blurring of the issue in Arkansas, moreover, framing abortion as a matter of limiting government intrusion dovetailed naturally with insuring that tax dollars weren't spent on the procedure. In 1989, Douglas Wilder ran for governor of Virginia and, appealing to mainstream voters just as NARAL had, outlined a new centrist stance: for legal abortion, against public funding, for parental consent laws. Back in Washington, some in NARAL were appalled, but Wilder was singing a tune Hickman had composed. Soon, candidates across the country began singing it as well. "Read my lips, no public funds for abortion," boasted one "pro-choice" candidate. "I voted for parental consent." Appropriately, it fell to Bill Clinton to distill the new philosophy into a single sentence. "While I have also supported restrictions on public funding and a parental notification requirement for minors," he explained, "I think the government should impose no further restrictions."

Feminists thus won the battle but lost the war, ceding to antigovernment, "pro-family" conservatives the power to define what reproductive freedom means. The result is a two-tiered system that has preserved "choice" only for affluent and middle-class women unaffected by the bevy of restrictions (waiting periods, parental consent laws, Medicaid bans) that states have passed in recent years, a situation for which Saletan suggests the pro-choice movement is partly to blame. Before Douglas Wilder ran for governor of Virginia, he notes, NARAL had never endorsed a candidate who embraced parental notice laws. Yet the group endorsed Wilder, and in the years to come would frequently back moderates with similar views.

Saletan's argument is so carefully documented, and so insightful, that nobody on either side of the abortion debate will be able to dismiss it lightly. His book will likely stand as the most important study of abortion politics since the sociologist Kristin Luker's 1984 classic, *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood*. His conclusion that conservatives have won the abortion war, however, doesn't hold up under scrutiny. Consider a statement that appears in his own introduction, where he identifies the two "politically defeated extremes of the debate—on one side, opposition to legal abortion, and on the other, insistence on abortion rights with public funding and without parental control."

Feminists won the battle but lost the war, ceding to 'pro-family' conservatives the power to define what reproductive freedom means.

It takes a second to realize that one of the "politically defeated" extremes Saletan has just consigned to the dustbin of history happens to be the pro-life view. If, as he claims, conservatives have won the abortion war, the victory must seem awfully hollow to people who believe the real issue isn't access—there were over a million legal abortions performed in the United States last year, after all—but saving the unborn. To people like former Operation Rescue leader Randall Terry, who once spearheaded the most vibrant grassroots conservative movement in America, claiming victory would seem absurd. Terry's name does not appear in the book, nor do the stories of the thousands of embittered pro-life activists furious that virtually no Republicans talk openly about outlawing abortion these days.

It's not that Saletan is unaware of this. He notes, for example, how George W. Bush bowed to reality during the 2000 presidential campaign, emphasizing parental notification and other restrictions (just as Al Gore did) while suggesting that banning abortion outright should be left "to the Congress, if America is ever ready for a constitutional amendment." He also shows how, even in conservative states like Virginia and Texas, candidates who propose outright bans on abortion lose. But if this is so, the losers in the abortion war surely aren't only, or even primarily, liberals. Saletan documents one side of the story—the pragmatic compromises made by pro-choicers—but leaves out the other: the collapse of extremist groups like Operation Rescue, which once had the power to shut down whole cities, and the subsequent emergence of a violent antiabortion underground. The latter development may be disquieting to liberals. But, as is nearly always true when social movements turn toward violence, it is a sign not of strength but of frustration and despair.

The picture gets even darker for pro-life absolutists when one considers the unintended consequences of some of the restrictions imposed in recent years. As Saletan notes, studies by the Alan Guttmacher Institute have shown that when parents learn of their daughters' pregnancies, the vast majority urge them not to bear children but to have abortions. Another study found that one-fourth of abortion patients said they were having the procedure because their husbands or boyfriends wanted it. Parental consent laws and other efforts to expand the definition of "you" in the question "who decides?," in other words, may result in fewer babies being born, not fewer abortions. Saletan quotes the sociologist Carol Joffe, who has pointed out that for poor women the choice most out of reach these days is arguably not terminating a pregnancy but becoming a mother. Financial penalties for women on welfare who have children, family caps and policies that encourage the use of Norplant all "restrict poor women's ability to choose childbearing" (an odd set of policies for a Republican Party supposedly wedded to family values).

Saletan does not shy away from highlighting these ironies. What matters to him, though, are the principles framing the debate, and those principles, he claims, are conservative. But this is true only if one equates conservatism with what Saletan christens "Reagan's Law": the notion that as government expands, liberty contracts. This is indeed a sacred principle for the libertarian wing of the Republican Party. But it is nothing of the sort for the wing represented today by the religious right: social conservatives who champion order over freedom in the personal and cultural realms. As anyone who has lived in America since 1980 is well aware, conservatives of this hue want to invert Reagan's Law in numerous areas of life, empowering the government to remove pornography from the airwaves, to force pregnant women to bear children, to police the bedroom in search of sodomites. It may be true that

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the right to privacy, which the Supreme Court so powerfully affirmed in the recent *Lawrence v. Texas* ruling, is grounded in the classical conservative principle of limited government, but in America today its assertion tends to sow panic on the right, not the left.

Even if one disagrees with his conclusions, however, Saletan makes a convincing case that liberals and feminists should not be handed victory bouquets in the culture wars just yet. America may not be ready to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, but, thirty years after that decision was handed down, neither has it embraced the vision of equality and liberation that feminists once dreamed about. The most sobering—and slyly damning—aspect of Saletan's account is not that this vision remains unfulfilled but that, tailoring their rhetoric to the projections of pollsters and strategists, many pro-choice activists have stopped challenging a culture that doesn't trust women to govern their own lives. As a short-term political strategy, it's hard to argue with this. In the long term, it is guaranteed to enshrine a truncated notion of reproductive rights that will leave many disadvantaged women wondering what all the fuss about preserving *Roe* is about. ■

Liberal Pieties

JoANN WYPIJEWSKI

CATHOLICISM AND AMERICAN FREEDOM: A History.
By John T. McGreevy. Norton. 409 pp. $26.95.

THE NEW ANTI-CATHOLICISM: The Last Acceptable Prejudice.
By Philip Jenkins. Oxford. 258 pp. $27.

John McGreevy begins his book with an emblematic story. The year is 1859; the place, Boston. The public schools, dominated by the Protestant elite who also write the law, start each day with obligatory reading of the King James Bible and recitation of the Ten Commandments. Glorious as the King James version is, it is not taught as literature but, with the commandments, is intended to build moral fiber in the students, a great many of whom are Catholic. It disturbs twenty-first-century assumptions to imagine Catholics opposing school prayer, but the church doesn't subscribe to the Protestant Bible, or to private Bible reading in general, and was even more hostile to it in the nineteenth century. Nor are Catholic and Protestant versions of the Ten Commandments the same, the latter proscribing "graven images," an affront to the whole Catholic rococo of crucifixes and icons, Virgin shrines, reliquaries and sacred art.

Returning to our story, one day a 10-year-old Catholic boy at the Eliot School, Thomas Whall, is instructed to recite the commandments. He refuses. Days of urgent meetings follow, but the school committee decides it will not compromise. Again the boy is asked to read the commandments and again refuses, upon which an assistant to the principal declares, "Here's a boy that refuses to repeat the Ten Commandments, and I will whip him till he yields if it takes the whole forenoon." A half-hour later the child's hands are ripped and bleeding from the blows of a rattan stick; by one account he faints during the torture. All boys unwilling to recite the commandments are ordered out of the school; hundreds leave. Because they had been urged in church to resist Protestant conformity, to "recite their own Catholic prayers" and "not to be ashamed," they are seen in some quarters as mindless slaves to priestcraft. The most important Republican Party newspaper in Boston (Republicans were the liberals then) editorializes: "We are unalterably, sternly opposed to the encroachments of political and social Romanism, as well as to its wretched superstition, intolerance, bigotry and mean despotism." When Whall and his father sue the assistant for excessive force, the court vindicates school authority, ruling that the child's disobedience threatened the stability of the school, hence the foundation of the state.

A neat illustration of the shifting nature of morality—today the principal would be locked up for child abuse—the story is important for the way it complicates generalized definitions of Catholic and liberal worldviews. It is McGreevy's intention to elucidate the dialectical relationship between Catholic communalism and liberal individualism in the development of standard-issue notions of freedom in America. He traces the route by which church agitation for state funding of its schools, coupled with its opposition to de facto Protestantism in public schools, led to the elimination of organized prayer in the latter. He analyzes the work of Catholic thinkers who drafted some of the first minimum-wage laws, articulated concepts of social welfarism, gave succor to early trade unionism—in effect, defined liberal reformism—and of those who made the backlash against sexual freedom, the church's latter-day mission.

Fascinating as that all is, ultimately McGreevy does something more valuable: prompting a meditation on power, and its shadow, marginality; on freedom, and its inevitable price, unfreedom; on faith, particularly the kind dressed up as secular rationalism. In the end, neither church power nor state power comes out smelling sweet, a lesson of especial import for liberals accustomed to challenging only one set of assumptions in church-state contests.

In a sense, power is Philip Jenkins's subject too, only he finds it all in the hands of gays, feminists, their supporters in the art world, the liberal media and the ranks of self-hating Catholics, proponents of what he calls "the new anti-Catholicism."

A casual peruser of the book's back jacket might see the endorsements of William Donohue of the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights (a kind of Catholic Anti-Defamation League) and of Michael Novak, notable recently for trying to convince the Vatican of the justice of unprovoked war, and dismiss Jenkins as a right-wing crank. That would be a mistake. The author of such insightful works as *Pedophiles and Priests*, written after the scandals of the early 1990s, and the masterful *Moral Panic*, on changing concepts of the child and of child abuse through American history, Jenkins is ordinarily a cool dissector of the cultural construction of social problems. He aims to be the same here, but his book is a muddle, alternately careful to distinguish anti-Catholicism from anticlericalism, policy disputes from prejudice, and then recklessly defining political protest—most dramatically, ACT UP's 1989 action inside St. Patrick's Cathedral—as hate crime, anti-Vatican rhetoric as hate speech, discrimination against policies as discrimination against persons.

The conflicts Jenkins discusses might have presented an occasion to challenge

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the slippery concepts of hate crime and hate speech so readily embraced by liberals, the repressive simple-mindedness at the heart of efforts to reduce socially bred antagonisms to matters of criminal punishment, and the dangerous equation of speech and action that is made by self-advertised defenders of freedom when it suits their purposes. Jenkins flirts with this, expressing skepticism that censorship or expanded prosecutorial powers can accomplish shifts in consciousness. But he is so intent on advancing his thesis—"anti-Catholicism must be seen as the great unknown 'antiism' or phobia, the most significant unconfronted prejudice in modern America"—that the book distills to a contest between angry, impolite liberationists and beleaguered, presumably conservative Catholics. As ever, the accent on feelings, however collectivized, rather than the push-pull of social forces, leads to terribly pinched conclusions. His argument dead-ends, as it's bound to, in the politics of sensitivity training, a watch-what-you-say political correctness, this time toward Catholics.

One could debate how "significant" anti-Catholicism is today. By pop culture's gauge, it's surely also significant that the most interesting television family, the Fishers of *Six Feet Under*, with their secrets and faceted sexuality, is Catholic; that the liberal icon of mainstream TV for the past four years, President Josiah Bartlet of *The West Wing*, is Catholic; that the Sopranos, who both confirm and confound stereotypes, are Catholic. Although they figure far larger in mass consciousness than the theatrical satire *Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All to You*, Jenkins doesn't mention them. Instead, he catalogues potshots taken at the iconography, the clergy, the Pope—Sister Mary, Andres Serrano's *Piss Christ*, Sinéad O'Connor's *Saturday Night Live* tear-up of the Pope's picture, Tony Kushner's denunciation of the Pope in these pages after Matthew Shepard's murder—and notes that similarly vituperative statements would not be tolerated against any other group.

He points to the pains taken recently to argue that Islam is a religion of peace when in practice it has also been repressive and bloody-minded. But he misreads the motivations of Islam's non-Muslim mainstream defenders. Since the same government officials who flatter Islam and warn against vigilantism are also the authors of state-sponsored harassment of and terror upon Muslims, their encomia to the faith ought properly to be understood not as sensitivity but as social control. Likewise, generosity

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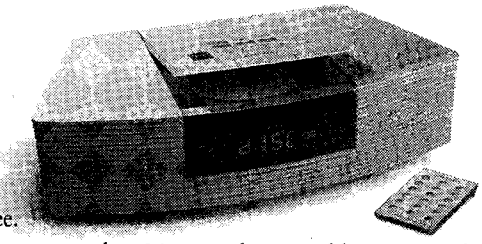

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toward Islam among liberals these days largely reflects respect for civil liberties, not religion. Individual Catholics might take offense at the freewheeling criticism of their church, but among them there is no equivalent of The Muslim, The Arab, who really has become the bogeyman.

The church is in a different category, and political jabs against it are more usefully compared with those against Saudi Arabia or any other religious state except Israel. On that last point, Jenkins is right: There is a double standard when it comes to addressing Jewish power, which barely can be spoken of, and Catholic power, which inspires no such reticence. Jenkins recognizes that such power is political not religious, institutional not individual, but he quickly retreats, identifying "a very thin line between protest and blasphemy" when the target is the Vatican, between protest and anti-Semitism when it is Israel, and seeming to accept "offense to believers" as the standard for judging on which side of the line political speech falls. That is nonsense. Politics being organized conflict, offense is its nature. Tiptoeing around Jewish sensitivities to avoid plainspeaking about Israeli brutality is neither honest nor healthy. Attacks on the church's policy interventions on sexuality and reproduction may sometimes be raw, but at least they recognize power for what it is. Certainly he Vatican's seven-page multilingual denunciation of homosexuality following the Supreme Court sodomy decision, and its vow to lead a global campaign against gay rights, gives the lie to any suggestion that the church is the put-upon weak sister in the culture wars.

Like Jenkins, McGreevy recapitulates the history of anti-Catholic ugliness—the Know-Nothings and Klan attacks, the various state bans forbidding Catholic children from public schools, the scare literature and elite tracts, sometimes one and the same. But his historical pairings more effectively reveal the poisonous nature of that ugliness. Prejudice, as McGreevy shows without actually arguing the point, is a problem not because it makes people feel bad but because of the blinders it requires the bigots to wear with respect to their own, favored culture, and the way that culture, if dominant, is enforced and reproduced.

Thus in the nineteenth century, the liberal intelligentsia decried Vatican authoritarianism. No quarrel there. But for priests, nuns and ordinary Catholics to be branded enemies, as they were, this authoritarianism had to be made utterly alien; and America, its opposite, made a model of liberty. In 1870 the First Vatican Council announced the dogma of papal infallibility on matters of faith and morals. Writing from Rome for *The Nation*, Charles Eliot Norton said that the world was now divided "between the principle of authority and that of freedom in matters of opinion." That simplistic formula would be reiterated down the decades, and in the late 1940s would form the basis of a celebrated series of *Nation* articles against the church by Paul Blanshard, who railed against Catholicism's "organized system of cultural and moral controls" (and whose passion for "American freedom" was matched only by his enthusiasm for anti-Communism and eugenics). Other intellectuals of the day rated those faiths or sects that fostered freedom and those that inhibited it, with the historian William Warren Sweet crediting Puritans and Calvinists with "all the great concepts for which American democracy stands today." One of those was capitalism, whose rise Weber had associated with Calvinist asceticism and whose iron logic was associated in the liberal imagination not with dogma but with dynamism.

"Our culture is a Protestant, and not a Catholic culture," Harvard University's Howard Mumford Jones wrote in describing "The Drift to Liberalism in the American Eighteenth Century." "It is a Protestant culture begun in dissent and retaining dissent as its chief characteristic." Like Sweet and Blanshard, Jones was writing in the period between the 1930s and 1950s, when much intellectual firepower was trained on defining "Americanism" and "American culture," a culture described by Henry Steele Commager as "practical, democratic, individualistic, opportunistic, spontaneous, hopeful"; by Talcott Parsons as freedom-loving and entrepreneurial; by Robert Merton as distinctly suited to reason and experimental science because of its climate of "organized skepticism"; by Charles Morris as "non-dogmatic."

The resilience of those definitions is evidenced, in a backhanded way, by the recent profusion of T-shirts, buttons and other paraphernalia of protest against the Bush Administration proclaiming "I Want My Country Back," the implicit notion of a hijacking reifying the ideal. Now as before, the problem with liberalism is the problem with any faith: Belief in the ideal necessitates delusion. For young Thomas Whall in the 1850s, dissent was not an option because for a child in the church it was unthinkable, and for an American it was allowable only within the terms of right-

THE BLUE LAWS

My mother, a brunette, hurried in her cloth coat
through postwar Sundays, which fell

as they were meant to fall, too slowly.
Hair windblown, laddered nylons askew,

she leaned against a Packard
to straighten a seam. They were young,

my parents, nursing their rusty prewar love.
Love was never again the love they had survived.

Having seen all and said nothing, there he stood
at the back of the classroom, my father,

a sailor on the Bill, in his outdated jacket
and Navy slang. He tottered on his new land-legs.

His eyes wore that seagoing barnacle stare.
Every Sunday my mother came to the city

to drink illegally, until silent and sick with drink.
And then in its way the war was over.

William Logan

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thinking. Catholicism was excluded from right-thinking, even from Americanism. Today the spiritual descendants of the Eliot School authorities are legion, and include George W. Bush, whose foreign policy flows from the "City on a Hill" exceptionalism that the Boston elite embraced and whose definitions of liberty and individualism are similarly situational.

We may sneer at Bush's assertion that God commanded him to invade Iraq, but the roots of that claim are deep in a tradition of American goodness. This country's overseas imperial adventure began, after all, with Calvinist missionaries from Boston, midwives to the destruction of Hawai'i, who counseled a suffering people that the cure for all ills lay in Jesus, buttoned-up sexuality and private property. McGreevy, I should note, says nothing about liberalism's role in securing relative freedom and wealth at home by imposing unfreedom and penury abroad. Whatever arguments may arise for or against liberalism or Catholicism, he leaves them largely to the reader.

On the subject of slavery, for instance, a key point of contention between liberal and church elites, he does not assign hypocrisy. He doesn't need to. In the same breath that it denounced Romanist mind control in the Eliot School case, the Republican Boston *Atlas* and *Bee* opposed "the monster institution of human slavery and for the same reasons." Although there were some heroic Catholic laymen and clergy who eventually joined radical Republican ranks, officially the church reckoned that slavery might not be such a bad thing—if it wasn't a matter of buying and selling, if slaves weren't "thingified," to borrow Martin Luther King's memorable phrase, if they were allowed to marry, if lynching stopped, if they were treated well, preserved as families and, especially, brought the good news. In other words, if slavery wasn't slavery. In 1839 Pope Gregory XVI barred Catholics from participating in the slave trade, though not from owning slaves. In America, Catholics of the reformist/fantasist opinion argued that there was no reason whites couldn't be slaves too, and, with respect to freemen, they rarely segregated churches and generally accepted black-white intimacy so long as it was within the holy sacrament of matrimony. Beneath this surface confusion, however, lay a crude consistency. For the issue of slavery forced a choice between love, the "queen of virtues," and authority, what Philadelphia's Bishop Francis Kenrick plainly named the "social order." Kenrick, writing the first US textbook in Catholic moral theology in 1843, bemoaned the atrocities that defined slavery but worried more that immediate emancipation would mean chaos, radicalism, institutional concessions to individual rights. In one of many reiterations of the church's original sin—its identification with power in the Holy Roman Empire—"Love thy neighbor" took second seat to preservation of order.

Now, many prominent Abolitionists held to a similar hierarchy of values, only in their case "order" was laissez-faire economics, which they called "freedom." McGreevy is helpful here, linking both mainstream liberal opposition to chattel slavery and nonchalance toward wage slavery to the laissez-faire commandment of "freedom of contract." *The Nation*'s founding editor, E.L. Godkin, despised slavery and unions, considering the latter combinations in restraint of trade, and until about 1917 the magazine was exceedingly hostile to workers' movements, supporting law-and-order reflexes, whether in the form of the hanging of the Haymarket anarchists or the violent suppression of strikes.

The church, for its part, rejected freedom of contract, saying such freedom was an illusion where workers struggled to survive. "Free competition," wrote the Italian Jesuit Matteo Liberatore in the late 1880s, "is a terrible weapon, most effectual to crush the weak and reduce whole populations to economic slavery under a rod of iron wielded by the potent rulers of social wealth." Or, as Marx put it more succinctly, "It is not individuals but capital that establishes itself freely in free competition."

There was the rub. Protestant liberals hated and distrusted Catholics, but they hated and distrusted socialists more. The huge immigrant proletariat was drawn to both, and with less contradiction than Catholic leaders would admit. With its advocacy for a "living wage," for profit sharing or, in its absence, for unions, for government intervention where wages were "insufficient to support a frugal and well-behaved wage earner," the church was the enemy of laissez-faire economics. But that "well-behaved" said it all. Old liberal worries over "the combined power of rebellion, Catholicism and whiskey" faded in the face of the red flag. "Freedom of opinion" had its limits, and even Charles Eliot Norton looked to Catholic authority to curb the "anarchic religion of the unchurched multitude." There was a class war to fight, and on that bloodied ground liberalism made its historic compromise with Catholicism.

By the 1930s, McGreevy writes, "the most obvious legacy of early Catholic involvement in the union movement was not

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the development of Catholic social thought but Catholic leadership in the struggle against socialism." Liberal fears of Catholic authoritarianism would resurface in the 1940s and '50s, and again be trumped by fears of Communism. Liberalism had found its calling, and the church, so easily derided in other areas of civic life, could reliably be counted on to manage dissent. Later, Paul VI would favor economic redistribution, and on his watch Latin American bishops would meet in Medellín to critique "liberal capitalism" and articulate a "preferential option for the poor." But his name would forever be welded to *Humanae Vitae*, the disastrous encyclical rejecting all forms of artificial contraception. Once capitalism "won," there was nothing left to fight about but sex.

Re-enter Jenkins, whose book revolves largely around contests over sexuality and seems to have been prompted, in fact, by the sex panic around priests, with its echoes of old denunciations of Catholicism as "the whore of Babylon," politically corrupt and sexually dangerous. We're inclined now to regard the Catholic Church as the sex police, and there's much evidence for that—from the "love the sinner, hate the sin" posture on homosexuality to the international bullying on reproductive rights to the criminal abuses of "bad girls" depicted in harrowing detail in the new docudrama *The Magdalene Sisters*. Yet another view has always run parallel, that of a hypersexual, "Italianate" (read: effeminate, pederastic) Catholicism. In the nineteenth century, anti-Catholic sensationalism (one of the most notorious such tracts underwritten by a prominent Abolitionist) provided, as Jenkins writes, "one of the few socially approved vehicles for pornographic interest," so laden was it with lecherous priests, lesbian nuns, sensual iconography and beastly goings-on in the confessional.

Indeed, the confessional was one of the few places where sexuality could be plainly discussed. And if, as Foucault suggests, the penitential rite was another "scheme for transforming sex into discourse," thereby controlling it, it also provided a zone of privacy in which, as a practical matter, people could unburden themselves of their secrets. Not ideal, but what is? In that aforementioned 1843 moral theology, Bishop Kenrick also instructed confessor-priests that it was a married woman's right to coax herself to climax "by touches" if she didn't experience orgasm during intercourse, that a man who ignored his wife's pleasure was guilty of a venial sin of omission and that—contrary to some Victorian counsel urging women to distract themselves during lovemaking to avoid orgasm—the woman should yield to her body, the intentional avoidance of orgasm being a mortal sin. This recommendation, Peter Gardella observes in his intriguing book *Innocent Ecstasy: How Christianity Gave America an Ethic of Sexual Pleasure*, "reflected normative Catholic teaching" at a time when the Calvinists spoke only of sin.

Jenkins offers no brief for the church's sexual agenda or its errant priests, but he rightly suspects games of "gotcha." He notes that the soundest study of priestly sexual misconduct—involving 2,252 priests over forty years—indicates that 1.7 percent behaved badly, such behavior ranging from inappropriate speech to rape, and in only one case involving a true pedophile: i.e., an adult sexually interested in prepubescent children. Obviously, some 1,500 priests accused of any sexual abuse between the 1960s and 2002 indicates trouble, but Jenkins argues that honesty demands a recognition that (a) incidents of pedophilia are rare, (b) priests hold no monopoly on such behavior and (c) "there is strikingly little evidence that clergy of any kind are any more or less likely to abuse than non-clerical groups who have close contact with children." A 1998 study by *Education Week*, for instance, cited 244 incidents of teacher-student sex over a six-month period, ranging from unwelcome touching to consensual relations to serial rape, an average of nine cases a week. The press has not elevated this to "social problem" status. As Jenkins puts it in *Pedophiles and Priests*, "there is no cultural home" for the pedophile pedant.

In the heat of the scandal, Jenkins was verbally pummeled for such views, by liberals who found fuel in the crisis to push for an end to celibacy and the ordination of women; by conservatives who saw their chance to purge gay priests. Garry Wills attacked him for making the unpopular but sensible distinction between sex with children and sex with teenagers, which Wills lumped together under the curious label "boy-sex." Given the near-totalitarian perception generated by the scandal, Jenkins's chapter on the subject here is most important. If he weren't otherwise so focused on gays and others demonizing Catholicism, he might have noticed, though, that the target of this sex panic was as much homosexuality as it was priests. Why else would newspapers wallow in stories of priests and boys, priests and men, when most targets of unwanted priestly attention are girls and women, and most sexual violence occurs in the heterosexual home?

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He might also have challenged the *Boston Globe*'s legal-rights-be-damned approach to the story, its retailing of false assertions (which he and McGreevy repeat in the case of one Father Paul Shanley) and its prime role in making monsters, to which the unlamented jailhouse murder of John Geoghan now stands as grim testament.

There is far more to say on the scandal, on the contradictions of Catholic homoeroticism and homophobia, the elision of accusation and guilt, the opportunism and disingenuousness of the press, the church and lawyers than can here be accommodated, or than either book explores. It is perhaps enough, for now, to let the century-and-a-half-old image of Thomas Whall, faint and bleeding, provoke us to more complicated considerations of the latest power struggle between the church and liberal Boston than the received narrative of perfidy versus righteousness provides. The church is surely disgraced, but what of liberalism when its victory comes at the price of truth, fairness, privacy rights, proportionality, the presumption of innocence, all of which were trampled in last year's media frenzy? As ever, in the contest between Catholicism and American freedom, neither side has much to preen about. ■

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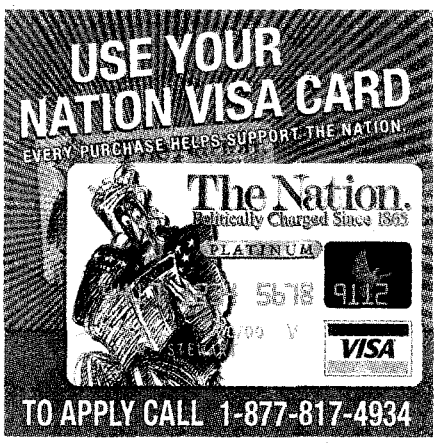

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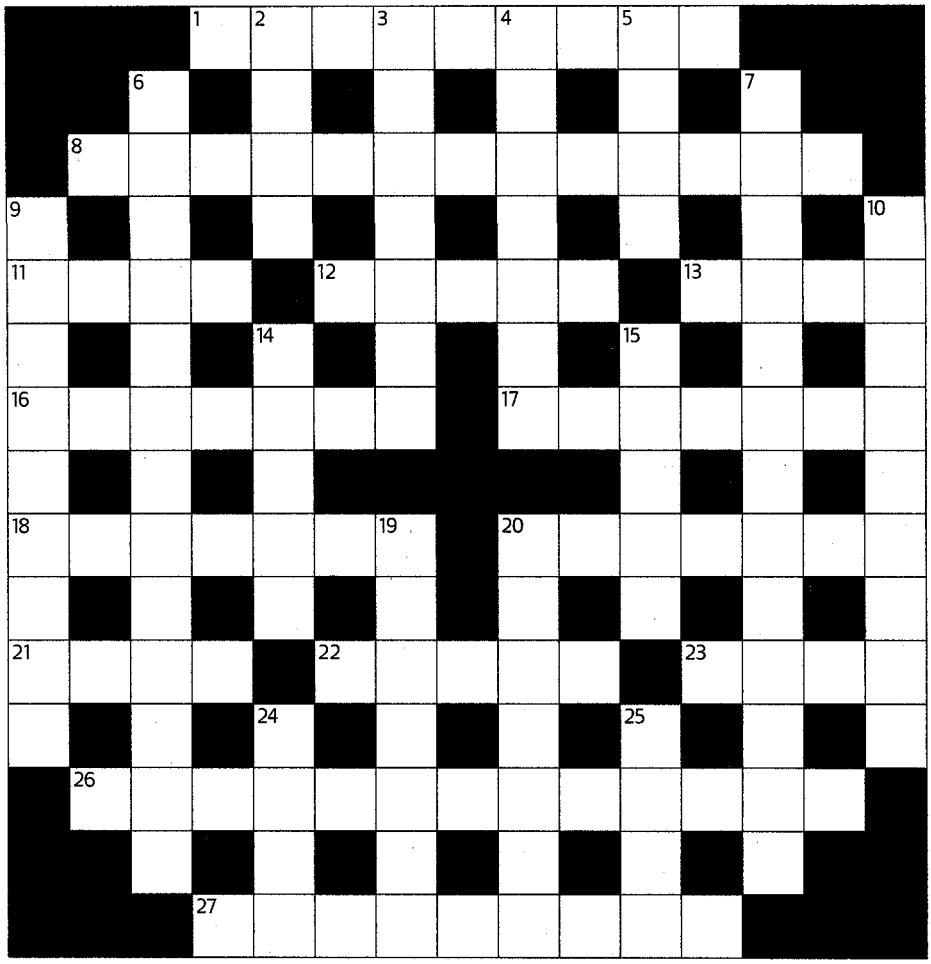

ACROSS

1 See 20 across

8 You can, if you get an exceptionally good deal on a trade-in. (You might have done a bit of dickering to do it.) (5,1,7)

11 Sounds like the Navy volunteers, in short, cause a bit of the green to show. (4)

12 If it's a short way that has the remants of fire on it, that's one way to hide your valuables. (5)

13 The singing star is eager to make a comeback, obviously. (4)

16 One or two, for example, consider it green, but you might consider it rotten. (7)

17 Fakers, rather than fakirs, rose up, to a point, but you might consider their profession trying. (7)

18 Dress for 6 down who has no money. (7)

20 and **1** Hep to that time machine that is on the checkout place? This goes down, turning left and then gets up. (16)

21 Such absence means absence of color when not second class. (4)

22 Reams of this possibly provide a campaign of vilification. (5)

23 Country life is bound to be past this, it is said. (4)

26 The brake on your car you have to pull back on by one who has a guardian, since a visit here implies trouble. (9,4)

27 and **25** down This bird might be one who put his mother in oil, but one on the dancing lake sounds carefree. (9,4)

DOWN

2 Quick to bring up something bad! (4)

3 and **19** The countries that went along with Roosevelt and Churchill could be the first ones to do so. (7,7)

4 The question frequently asked Doc might be a comment on dinner. (5,2)

5 Ink, in sporting fashion—or some indication of it. (4)

6 It's not very much per month in the Army, but you might have to declare it to be so. (7,6)

7 Those who observe one of the rites of passage—or the holding up thereof. (13)

9 Senator Kennedy has a chit for a debt, ending up rather foxy, in a boring way. (9)

10 Mixed-up cases have a part in what might be served at suppertime. (9)

14 What the worm had in song, showing what a happy face is. (5)

15 Is such a sweet girl making her coming-out? (5)

19 See 3

20 It's an opportunity for fifty to find space around the altar. (7)

24 The head char, in a way. (4)

25 See 27 across

PUZZLED? No more cross words. If you don't see why "Lures" are "Ground Rules" send for those of Mr. Lewis to: Puzzled, The Nation, 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003, or access our website at www.thenation.com/about/crossword.mhtml.

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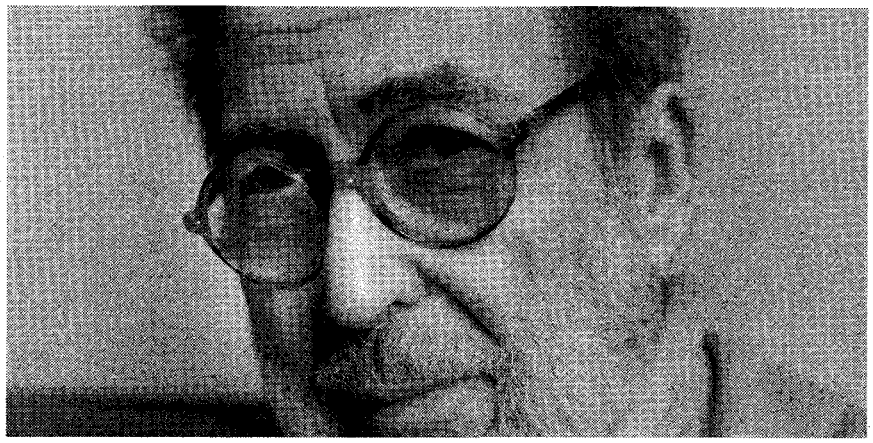

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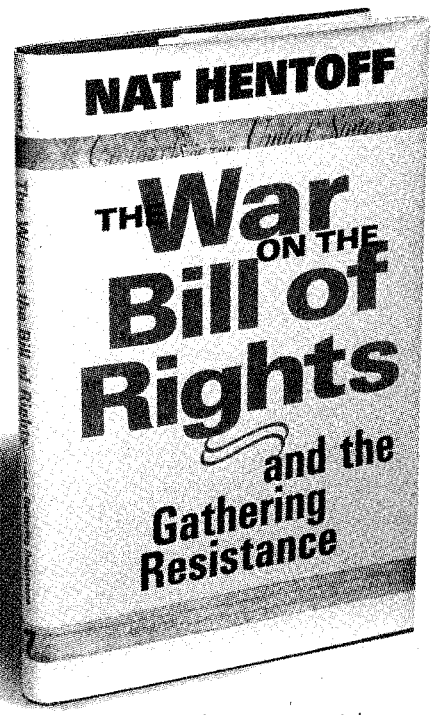

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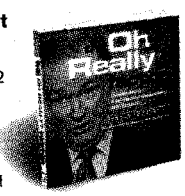

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